AN

EXPOSITION

WITH

Practical Obſervations

CONTINUED UPON

The Thirty-fifth, Thirty-ſixth, and Thirty-ſeventh Chapters of the Book OF

JOB:

Being the Subſtance of Thirty-five LECTURES.

By *JOSEPH CARYL*, Miniſter of the Goſpel.

ROM. 11. 33.

O the depth of the Riches both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God! How unſearchable are his Judgements, and his Wayes paſt finding out!

LONDON,
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1664.

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TO THE

Christian Reader,

TO

Those Especially of this CITY who have been

THE

PROMOTERS

Of this WORK

SIRS,

HAving, in the Prefatory Epistle to the former part set forth the state of these three Chapters here presented and expounded, together with the general scope of Elihu *(the speaker) in them; be pleased to look back thither for some help towards your satisfaction in those points. All that I shall entertain you with in this Address, is only*

to

to tell you, that, as I have now, through the good hand of God with me, finished my promised Commentary upon the whole Discourse of Elihu with Job, divided into a Preface and four distinct Speeches, contained and continued in six entire Chapters; so, I purpose, through the same assistance, to proceed (with convenient speed) in drawing up and sending out (in one Volume more) my slender apprehensions and meditations upon the remaining five Chapters of this Book: In which it will appear, how (when Elihu (doubtless with good success) had acted the part of a wise and learned Moderator, in that grand Controversie of Providence between Job and his three Friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, and had done both with him and them, it will appear, I say, how) God himself was pleased to come forth and undertake the matter in difference, giving, as the Supream Moderator of that Noble Disputation, an unerring and an irrefragable Determination of it, to the full conviction, and in the issue, to the full consolation of Job, as also to the high content of of all that heard it, even of his three Friends; who, though they were severely reproved and censured by God, as having over-severely re-

pro-

proved and censured Job, yet he graciously directed them a way to make their attonement, and was not only reconciled unto them himself, but reconciled them to his servant Job; winding all up in Peace and Love, in mutual rejoycings and embracings. Now the God of Peace, Truth and Love, lead us all into the love of Truth and Peace, and teach us to profit alwayes by what hath at any time been written (according to Truth) upon those things, which himself afore-time caused to be written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. That, what is here written may be useful to all, especially to those who are (as Job was) in a state of suffering, till they come to be (as Job is) past all sufferings, is the hearts desire and prayer of,

SIRS,

September 7th
1664.

Your affectionate

Friend to serve you,

JOSEPH CARYL.

ERRATA.

PAge 43. l. 8. dele *hurt*. p. 92. l. 38. for *eve* r. *eye*. p. 95. for 3. r. 2. p. 96. l. 7. for 112. r. 102. p. 147. l. 30. for 50. r. 51. p. 153. l. 28. for *Fourthly*, r. *Further*. p. 165. l. 18. for 4. r. 3. p. 205. l. 34. for 29. r. 24. p. 300. l. 3. r. *comfortable*. p. 322. l. 7. for 26. r. 36. p. 458. l. 35. dele *it*. p. 551. l. 33. for 2. r. 1.

AN EXPOSITION WITH Practical Obſervations UPON The Thirty-fifth, Thirty-ſixth, and Thirty-ſeaventh Chapters of the Book of JOB.

JOB, Chap. 35. Verſ. 1, 2, 3.

1. *Elihu ſpake moreover, and ſaid,*
2. *Thinkeſt thou this to be right, that thou ſaidſt, My righteouſneſs is more than Gods?*
3. *For thou ſaidſt, What advantage will it be unto thee, and, What profit ſhall I have, if I be cleanſed from my ſin?*

THis Chapter containeth the third Oration, Speech, or Addreſs, which *Elihu* made to *Job*; in which he giveth anſwer to, confutes, and reproves, three aſſertions, or complaints, we may call them complaining aſſertions, with which he chargeth *Job*.

The Firſt is laid down in the ſecond and third verſes; *Thinkeſt thou this to be right, that thou ſaidſt, my righteouſneſs is more than Gods? For thou ſaidſt, What advantage will it be?*

be? &c. The answer of *Elihu* to this both complaining and (as proposed) proud assertion, is found in the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th verses of this Chapter.

The Second uncomely complaint is charged on *Job* at the 9th verse; *By reason of the multitude of oppressions, they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason of the arme of the mighty.* To this *Elihu* gives answer in the 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th verses.

The Third is expresst in the former part of the 14th verse; *Although thou sayest, thou shalt not see him.* To this *Elihu* begins to make answer in the latter part of the same verse, and continueth his answer to the end of the Chapter; *Yet judgement is before him, therefore trust thou in him,* &c. These are the general Parts of the whole Chapter. I shall now proceed to the explication of particulars.

Vers. 1. *Elihu spake moreover, and said.*

Who this *Elihu* was, I have shewed heretofore, as also the spirit and temper of the man; and it may well be said here, *Moreover, he said*; for we have already heard many of his sayings in the 32d, 33d, and 34th Chapters of this Book.

This first verse is a connecting Preface to that which followeth; for when *Elihu* had given *Job* liberty of speech, or of answering for himself, at the latter end of the former Chapter, and had, as we may suppose, paused a while, expecting what answer *Job* would make, he perceiving that *Job* either had nothing to offer, or would offer no more, began again; as if the Author of this Book had said, when *Elihu* saw that *Job* would not reply, or had nothing more to say for his own vindication, he let him understand, that he had more to say for his conviction.

Elihu spake moreover, and said.

And he said many things, and those very sharp things, his words were indeed as goads, and as nails, yea as swords, and spears, in the heart of *Job*; he objected against him such things, as were in the matter very bad, and such for the manner, as a godly, yea an ingenious man, ought not only to be ashamed of, but to abhorre: And thus he undertakes him,

Vers. 2.

Vers. 2. *Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, my righteousness is more than Gods?*

In this verse *Elihu* enters his renewed suit against *Job*, or here he proposeth what he had to charge *Job* with; *Thinkest thou this to be right?* And in the next or third verse, he endeavours to make good this charge, or to prove that *Job* had said so; *for thou hast said,* &c. As if he had said, I will prove it to thy face, that thou hast said, *My righteousness is more than Gods*; for thou hast said, *What advantage will it be unto thee, and what profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?* So then in the second verse you have the charge, and in the third the proof of the charge.

Thinkest thou this to be right?

The word which we render *to think*, notes more than a bare thinking, even the devising, or curious contriving of a matter in the brain; hast thou formed this in thy Imagination, and concluded it in thy Understanding for right, for sound, and wholsome Doctrine, for a very truth? There may be a threefold exposition of these words:

חשב

An hoc cogitasti in jus. Heb:

First, As an appeal to *Jobs* own breast; *Thinkest thou this to be right?* let me ask thee the question, Hast thou said well in this? dost thou believe thou hast? let thy Conscience judge, and make answer. I doubt not but thou wilt be self-condemned: And indeed no guilty person can be absolved, himself (if himself) being judge.

Secondly, We may look upon the words, not only as an appeal, but as a reproof, or objurgation; *Thinkest thou this to be right?* What man in his right mind would think so! thou toldest thy wife in the second Chapter, *Thou speakest like one of the foolish women*; and may it not now be told thee, *Thou speakest like one of the foolish men?* Would any man in his wits utter a word of this import, a word of so gross a savour, of so dangerous a reflection upon the Justice of God, or so much as intimate himself by any the remotest consequences, more just, more righteous than God? why hath such a word dropt from thy mouth? Thus he chides, checks, and reproves him.

Thirdly, These words may have the sense of a denying question; *Thinkest thou this to be right?* Surely *Job* thou dost not

 think

think this to be right, I cannot believe that thou thinkest this to be right, thou are not surely so far left of Reason, and of Grace, as to think this to be right. This sense gives some allay to, or abatement of the former; surely thou dost not think so, though thou hast spoken so; though thy words may have this meaning, yet I hope this is not thy meaning; I am unwilling to take up thy opinion from thy expression; *Think'st thou this to be right?* From the first Exposition,

Note;

It is a strong way of conviction, to put or refer a matter to his Judgement and Conscience, against whom we make opposition.

Thinkest thou this to be right? I refer it to thy own Conscience, whether this be right yea or no; and thus the Scripture speaks often. When God would stop the mouth from all contradiction, and not leave opposers a word to say, he leaves it upon them to say all. *Moses* intending to prove that none could prevaile against *Israel*, unless (God provoked by sin) delivered *Israel* up into their hands, gives this demonstration of it (*Deut.* 32. 31.) *Their Rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being Judges*; I refer this to our enemies opinion, whether the Dunghil gods, the Idols whom they serve and trust to, be like *Jehovah*, the living God, whom we have (and ought) to serve and trust to. You that are our enemies, do you think your Rock is like our Rock? I know you do not. The Apostles, *Peter*, and *John*, referred it back to the judgment of their Judges, whether it were fit for them, to obey their commands, yea or no, when they called them, and charged them to preach no more in that name, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, (*Acts* 4. 19.) *Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* We have received a command from God to preach, *Go teach all Nations* (Math. 28. 19.) and we have received a command from you not to preach; now we leave it with you, whether it be fit for us to obey God or you. So the Apostle having admonished the *Corinthians* to flee from Idolatry, presently adds (1 *Cor.* 10. 14, 15.) *I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say*; I have given you the rule, and I leave it to your consideration, what's best and safest for you to do. *I speak as to wise men*, that's a holy insinuation; As if he had said, *I know you are wise men, men of understanding, and therefore I do not so much command you to obey what I say, as to judge what I say;*

I am much perswaded you cannot judge otherwise in this thing than I do; There is so much truth and reason in what I say, that you cannot but say so too. The Same Apostle speaks again in a like forme about womens praying uncovered; *Judge in your selves, is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered* (1 Cor. 11. 13.) As if he had said, *I do not stand wholly to my own judgement in this case of conscience, I dare refer it to you, and stand to yours.* Thus in many things we may appeal unto the Consciences of those we deal with; & no doubt the Conscience is often satisfied while the Will stands out: Men of much understanding will dispute, when Conscience hath nothing to say; *Yea some will for their own ends argue that to be right, which* (in their Consciences) *they do not think to be so. Thinkest thou this to be right?* Thou hast said it, but dost thou think it? I trow not.

Observe, Secondly.

There is a Light within us that will shew us what's amiss, or not right.

Elihu doth not direct *Job* immediately to the Word, (though that's the authoritative and authentick Rule) but to his heart; thou hast a Light in thy self, whereby thou mayest see that this is not right. Thus the Apostle, (1 *Cor.* 11. 14, 15.) *Doth not even Nature it self teach you, that if a man have long haire, it is a shame unto him? but if a woman have long haire, it is a glory to her, for her haire is given her for a covering.* The Light which every man hath in him will shew this. Again, the Apostle (*Rom.* 2. 14, 15.) proveth that the old Gentiles had a light of Nature in them, which shewed them many things amiss. Thus he argueth; *For when the Gentiles that have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law*, (they do them by Nature, that is, by the Light of Nature, which shews them to do these things, that is, it sheweth them that they ought to be done, and they do them, as to the outward action, by that Light;) *those having not the Law* (that is, the written Word, published to them in that formality, which the people of God have, *these having not the Law*) *are a Law unto themselves; which shew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their Conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another.* This Light shewed those Gentiles so far what to do according to the Law, as left them with-

out excuſe, for not doing what it ſhewed. Goſpel Myſteries and matters of Faith are purely of Divine Revelation, but what the moral Law commands or forbids, the light of Nature leads us to do and to forbear.

There is a generation of people grown up and ſpreading amongſt us, who cry up *the light within them*, with neglect of, if not in oppoſition to the Word written and preached to them. Theſe make a very ill uſe of this notion; For whatoever bids us look to the light within us, to draw us off from the Word or light without us, erre greatly, and may quickly draw us into the greateſt errors both in Faith and Practiſe. 'Tis dangerous to go or act againſt the light within us, yet if we go or act alwayes by that light alone, we ſhall be in darkneſs before we are aware. Natural light without Scripture-light, proves a falſe light, and may quickly lead us out of the way, and beſides our duty. Therefore the Prophet, when any ſhould ſay, *Seek unto them that have familiar Spirits*, &c. doth not ſay, look to the light within you for reſolution, whether ye ſhould hearken to ſuch or no, but *to the Law, and to the Teſtimony: if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them*, (Iſa. 8. 20.) If that which is called light within us, ſpeak not according to the light of the Law and Teſtimony without us, there is no true light (or as the Margin hath it) *no morning in us*; the Day-ſtarre hath not riſen in ſuch hearts, nor do they ſpeak like children of the light. Take heed of ſtriking and ſo ſplitting againſt that Rock; yet certainly there is a light within us that muſt not be reſiſted. The Apoſtle reports *that* as the ſin of the old Gentiles (*Rom.* 1. 28.) *They did not like to retain God in their knowledge*; they had a light of God by nature, God was in their knowledge, but they liked not to think of God, but rather thought of the world, and of any vanity, than of God, rather of the creature, than of the Creator; for this cauſe God gave them up *to a reprobate mind, to do thoſe things which are not convenient*. They who obey not, who anſwer not the light of Nature in doing good, ſhall be left to the doing of thoſe evills which are againſt the light of Nature. Such were thoſe things which the Apoſtle calls (by a modeſt word) *not convenient*, or not fitting that duty and decorum, which man as man ſhould carefully and religiouſly obſerve. By which negative expreſſion, *Not convenient*, he poſitively intends the vileſt evils and debaucheries of Nature, not to be named.

τα μὴ καθήκοντα.

And

And if God were ſo wroth with the *Gentiles* for not anſwering the common Light of Nature, no marvel if he ſpake ſo dreadfully againſt thoſe that refuſe and oppoſe the Light of the moſt glorious Goſpel (*John* 3. 19.) *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſſe rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil.* Not to anſwer the Light of Conſcience within us rightly informed, much more not to obey the Light of the Goſpel without us, leaves us under condemnation. The Light within man will ſhew him very much what he ought to do, and judge him for not doing it. *Thinkeſt thou this to be right?* Doth the Principle planted in thee comply with this Poſition?

But what was it that *Elihu* puts the Queſtion about? You have it in the cloſe of the verſe;

That thou ſaidſt, My righteouſneſſe is more than Gods;

Or according to the ſtrictneſſe of the Hebrew, *My righteouſneſs is before Gods*. The Prepoſition here uſed is often taken comparatively, and hath the ſame ſignification with that (*Matth.* 11. 19.) where Chriſt ſaith (as we tranſlate) *Wiſdome is juſtified of her Children*; that is, Chriſt, or the Doctrine of the Goſpel, the Divine Light that ſhines there, is juſtified, that is approved and declared juſt, by all who are her Children indeed, *born not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God*. This is a good and profitable ſence. Though ſtrangers do not, will not juſtifie Wiſdome, yet her Children do and will. Nevertheleſſe that comparative tranſlation, and reading, which ſome contend for, carrieth in it a clear truth alſo, and ſerves to illuſtrate this Text in *Job*, now under-hand. *Wiſdome is juſtified more than her children, or rather than her children, or before her children*. That is, more, rather, and before the Scribes and Phariſees, who pretended highly, that they were the children, yea the chief, if not the only children of Wiſdome; and while they made this boaſt, they really reſiſted and oppoſed Jeſus Chriſt, who is wiſdome, and in whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdome: And therefore how much ſoever the Scribes and Phariſees flattered themſelves in their own opinion, or were applauded, and preferred by others, as children of wiſdome, or as very wiſe men; yet Jeſus Chriſt the true Wiſdome, was juſtified by God, and all good men, more than they, or before, yea infinitely before them; he was juſtified fully, but they

not

not at all. Such a negative sence Christ intends, in that comparative determination, between the Publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18. 14.) *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other:* That is, the Publican went home justified rather, or righteous rather, or more righteous than the Pharisee; the proud Pharisee, not being at all justified, nor righteous, but in his own eyes. Some Comparatives imply a perfect Negative to the opposite party, others only a partial. Such a comparative sence *Elihu* intimates in *Jobs* assertion of his righteousness. *Thou saidst, my righteousnesse is more than Gods*; Or I am to be justified rather than God.

But some may say, where spake *Job* this? where's the Chapter and Verse? did *Job*, or could *Job* overshoot himself to such a height of blasphemy?

I answer,

First, Some indeed charge *Elihu* deeply, as if he had feigned all these things against *Job*, or formed them up in his own Imagination, rather than grounded them upon any of his affections; but we need not thus wound *Elihu*, to get a salve for *Jobs* sore.

Therefore Secondly, I answer, that although *Job* had not spoken this in so many words, or syllabically, yet he had spoken that from which *Elihu* might gather such a sence, or of which he might make such an interpretation. And therefore he seems to say at the third verse, If thou thinkest this a falsehood, or too hard a charge, and shouldst deny that thou *hast said, My righteousness is more than Gods*; I'le tell thee what thou hast said, which hath given me ground (I think just and sufficient ground) for this accusation: Thou hast said, *What advantage will it be unto me? and what profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?* And is not this to make thy righteousnesse more than Gods?

But what righteousnesse is here meant?

I answer, There is a twofold righteousnesse.

First, There is the righteousnesse of our persons, which is either imputed in justification, or imparted in sanctification, (as hath been shewed upon some other passages of *Elihu's* discourse with *Job*) This is the righteousnesse of our persons; as justified we are righteous, as sanctified we are also righteous. Now when *Elihu* chargeth *Job* to say that his righteousnesse was more than Gods, we are not to understand it as if he had said, his personal righteousnes,

nes, in either notion, was more than Gods; for that righteousnes which is imputed to our persons, is indeed the righteousnes of God, (*Rom.* 10. 3.) but 'tis not a righteousnesse more than Gods. And as for that righteousnesse planted in our persons, how imperfect and mixt with corruption is that, at best, in this life? And therefore had *Job* spoken any such words, or had harboured such a thought, it had been blasphemy at the highest rate; and (as one expresseth it well) *If Job had spoken these horrible blasphemies, though extorted from him by utmost extremity, and in the greatest anguish of his spirit, surely Satan had got the day, and triumphed as Victor in this great conflict, not Job.* Should the most righteous man on Earth, or Angel in Heaven, say in strict sence, *My righteousnesse is more than Gods*, this saying were a charging of God with unrighteousnesse, yea (which Satan promised himself, and told God *Job* would do, if tryed to the utmost) *a cursing of God to his face.* But as *Job* abhorred to speak irreverently (though he sometimes spake passionately) of God, so, that he utterly disclaimed such thoughts of his own righteousnesse, hath appeared fully by his frequent protestations against all dependance upon, and trust in any self-righteousnesse or perfection, in divers passages of this Book.

Si hæc horrenda blasphemia fuissat ab eo extorta, Satan certè, non autem Jobus, in hoc certamine victoriam obtinuisset. Bez.

Secondly, There is a righteousnesse of our Cause, or of the special matter in controversie: In which sence (I conceive) *Judah* said of *Tamar*, (Gen. 38. 26.) *She hath been more righteous than I.* That is, She hath carried this businesse better, and more according to right. And thus we may understand *Elihu* charging *Job* for saying, *My righteousnesse is more than Gods*; that is, my Cause is more righteous than his; and to say that (which is the most moderate sence) was too great a boldnesse for any creature, yea a blasphemy against the Creator. Shall man presume to say that God doth not carry things righteously with him, or that there is no reason why God should deal so or so with him! But did *Job* ever affirm his Cause more righteous than Gods? I answer, not categorically, or directly; But *Elihu* hearing *Job* make so many complaints, might suppose he thought there was no reason why God should deal with him as he had done, and then he had been more righteous in his Cause than God.

The *Septuagint* read it without any comparison at all, which makes the meaning much more ease; they say not, *My righteousnesse*

ousnes is more than Gods, but, *I shall be found righteous before God*, or *in the sight of God*. This *Job* had said, and therefore made so many appeals to God. *I am just before God*, that is, *My cause will be found right and just in the sight of God*. And as *Job* had said this often equivalently, so once in terms, (Chap. 23. 10.) *When he hath tryed me, I shall come forth as gold*, or appear innocent before God; which he spake especially with an eye to those heavy accusations which his Friends brought against him, and laid upon him: And even for this *Job* might well be condemned of rashnesse by *Elihu*, who aimed at the throwing down of all self-righteousnes, at the stopping of every mouth, at the eclipsing of all humane glory, in the presence, and before the brightnesse of the Most Glorious, High and Holy God.

Justus sum ante conspectum Domini. Sept.

So then, even, this other more favourable reading, which speaketh not comparatively, but positively, *I am just before God*, that is, I shall be justified by God, or I doubt not but I shall be acquitted, and found right before God, this cannot every way be justified: It was *Jobs* fault and failing, that he was so confident God would not (he was farre from saying God could not) find fault with him. We may see (if we have spiritual eyes, or eyes enlightned by the Spirit, so many faults in our best services, as may make us ashamed to own them, rather than to boast of them before men, much more to bear up our selves before God upon them: For (as *Eliphaz* told *Job* in the 4th Chapter) *God chargeth his Angels with folly*, and the best of his Saints are unclean before him; therefore that was too much for *Job* to say of himself, though that's the easiest and most charitable Interpretation of what he said, when he said (as the Septuagint render) *I shall be found righteous before God*, or *in the sight of God*.

Præpositio illa Mom *verti potest* a *vel* ab, *ut hunc sensum* justus sum a *Deo, vel* justificabo causam meam *apud Deum.* Cajet.

Our Translation is very hard, hardest of all, *Thou hast said, my righteousnesse is more than Gods*; yet this *Elihu* might gather up consequentially from what he spake in the 19th Chapter, vers. 6, 7. *Behold I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard, I cry aloud, but there is no judgement.* As also from the passage, Chap. 23d vers. 2d. *Even to day is my complaint bitter, my stroke is heavier than my groaning:* In both places *Job* speaks as if God had not dealt rightly with him, as if God had been over-severe in afflicting him, or as if his complainings were short of his sufferings. In both or either of which, *Job* exceeds the bounds both of truth and

and duty; such extravagant expressions, have no apology but his pain, nor can any thing be an Advocate for him, but this, That Satan who was his Tempter, was also his Tormenter, and held him so long upon the Rack, that he uttered (as himself confessed, *Chap.* 42. 3.) *that which he understood not*, yea words by which *Elihu* understood that he said in effect, *My righteousnes is more than Gods*.

Note hence, first,

There is no thought of man further from right, than to think there is any unrighteousnes in the dealings of God with man.

Man can hardly do any thing that is just, and it is impossible God should do any thing that is unjust. Let God do what he will, it is right, and he is righteous in doing it: Yea, whatsoever evil God doth to a *Job*, to any of his good people, he is good to them in doing it (*Psal.* 73. 1.) *Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart*, or *clean of heart*. Not only is God Righteous and Just, but Good and Gracious in what he doth: though his dispensations are often very sad, yet they are never unequal; and as the worst of men shall at last acknowledge that he is just; so the best of men, a *Job*, a *David*, shall find and see at last with joy and thanksgivings, that God hath been good, yea best to them (considering their state) in his sorest and severest dealings: For *all the paths of the Lord* (as wel hard as soft, as well those that are set with Roses) *are mercy and truth*, (mercy as much as truth) *unto such as keep his Covenant, and his Testimonies*, Psal. 25. 10. He that shews mercy cannot but shew righteousnesse to his in all his wayes. *As he that doth righteousnes, is righteous*, (1 John 3. 7.) so he that is righteousnesse, cannot but do righteous things. God is not only righteous, but righteousnesse; he is essentially righteous, his righteousnesse is himself: A mans being, and his righteousnesse are two things. The man may subsist without righteousnesse (all men by nature, and while nothing but nature, though much sublimated and refined, if not converted, are unrighteous) but it is as impossible for God not to be righteous, as not to be. How can he who is righteous, yea righteousnesse it self, but do righteous things in all he doth, in every cause, in every proceeding, whether with Persons, Families, or Nations? Is it not then a most

unrighteous thing to think or say God hath, or can do any unrighteous thing?

Secondly Note,

He that complains that God deals over-severely with him, or otherwise than is fit, or otherwise than he hath deserved, makes himself, as to his Cause, more righteous than God.

If we say a man deals otherwise with us then we have deserved at his hands, we judge him, as to that action, uneven and unjust in his dealings. Surely then, if we think or speak hardly of the hardest wayes of God, we speak and think hardly of God himself. We cannot think well of God, unless we say all that he doth is well done. A thought, that there is but one twig in our rod more than is meet, or fit, or more than is good for us, or to think it abides one minute longer upon our backs, than is meet, or fit, or good for us, is to say, *Our righteousnesse is more than Gods*; yea, 'tis to say, Our wisdom is more than Gods, and our mercies are more than the mercies of God. Therefore take heed of such thoughts. Though we cannot see the righteousnesse of God in his works, yet we must say his works are righteous. It can never be right, not only to say, *Our righteousnes is more than Gods*, but so much as to say, *Our righteousnes is any thing to Gods.*

Thirdly Note,

What we speak rashly, may at any time be prest upon us hardly, and is sometimes very uncharitably.

It is very usual with those who accuse, or oppose others, to take things doubtful for certainties, their own conjectures for the assertions of their adversarie, and every thing which hath a likeneesse to an errour, to be errour. *Elihu* might have spoken more favourably to *Job*, he might have construed his sayings more candidly than he did: Had he taken *Jobs* words with a grain of Salt (as we speak) he needed not to have put so much Gall and Wormwood into his own: Had he not interpreted *Jobs* complaints strictly, according to the sound, or letter, but considered them with his scope, his aime, and purpose in speaking so, together with the extream pain of his body, and anguish of his soul, when he spake so, he had never given him such cutting answers.

In disputando cavendum, ne ex dictis adversarii per falsam consequentiam absurda deducamus, quibus illum gravamus, qua in re hic peccavit Elihu. Pisc.

But

But God justly, and in much wisdome, sharpned the spirit of *Elihu*, to speak cutting words to *Job*, that *Job* feeling the smart, might be made sensible of his errour, and at last be brought low, and broken under his hand. Milde words may skin a sore before 'tis searcht to the bottom, and so not only retard the Cure, but endanger the Patient. The holy Apostle fore-seeing the murmurings, quarrels and disputes which flesh and blood would make about Election or Predestination, doth not go about so much to answer them by Reason, as to represse them by a strong Reproof, and vehement Objurgation, (*Rom.* 9.20.) *Nay, but O man, who art thou that replyest against God! shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? hath not the Potter power over the Clay?* &c. Now as about that unsearchable depth of eternal Election, so about present dreadful dispensations, and providences, our undue reasonings and tumultuating thoughts of heart, concerning God, breaking our bounds, and forgetting with whom we have to do, or who hath to do with us, call for and deserve sharpest reproofs; *Who are you that reply against God! Who are you that think this to be right which you do, or any thing wrong which God doth? Who are you, that you should presume to say* (so much as by inference) *that your righteousnes is more than Gods, or, that it is any thing compared with the righteousnes of God!*

Thou hast said, my righteousnes is more than Gods.

What *Job* had said, which might give colour for this accusation, hath been touched before, in the mention of those Speeches, or Passages, forced from him by the greatnesse of his suffering. But *Elihu* gives it us yet more expresely in the next verse.

Vers. 3. *For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee, and what profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?*

As if he had said, O *Job*, If thou shouldest ask me, when or where thou hast said, *My righteousnes is more than Gods?* or how can I prove that thou hast said so? I may soon answer thee, and easily prove it thus, thou hast said, *What advantage will it be unto thee?* &c. Thou hast spoken as if no good were to be gotten by turning from evill; or that thou sufferest evil, being thy self free, at least turned from doing evil; and that therefore it availeth

thee

thee no more that thou art righteous, than if thou were the greatest sinner in the world. *So* thou hast said, and in saying so, thou hast said what I have charged thee with.

But here the Question may arise again, as much about the Proof, as about the Charge. When did *Job* say, *What advantage will it be unto me? and what profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?*

I answer, as he said not the former words contained in the Charge directly, they were only a collection raised consequentially by *Elihu*, so he said not these words which are the proof of the Charge expressely, but by consequences.

For the clearing of this, we must distinguish of what is meant by *profit* and *advantage*, when *Elihu* saith, *Thou saidst, What advantage shall it be unto thee, and what profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?* This advantage and profit may be considered,

First, As to his eternal well-being and salvation; Secondly, as to his present ease and consolation. We are not to understand it as if *Elihu* accused *Job* for saying, That to be cleansed from his sin, would be no advantage, no profit as to his eternal estate; that had been impious, and an Atheistical Speech, crossing the whole current of Scripture, and overthrowing the very foundation of godlinesse. Take away eternal reward and punishment, and where's Religion? where's either the love or fear of God? His meaning then is, that *Job* had said, it would be no profit, no boot to him for the present, or as to his then condition, if he were cleansed from his sin. This *Elihu* might gather from those two places (Chap. 9. 22, 23.) *This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the tryal of the innocent.* As if *Elihu* had said, Thou canst not avoid this proof of my first Charge; for he that saith, *God destroyeth the perfect and the wicked*, that is, the perfect as well as the wicked, saith also in effect, *What profit is it, that I am cleansed from my sin?* But thou hast said the former, therefore the latter also. Again thou hast said (Chap. 10. 15.) *If I be wicked, wo unto me, and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head. I am full of confusion, therefore see thou mine affliction*; weigh thy words, Thou hast said, *Wo to me, if I be wicked, and if I be righteous*, (it will not be much better with me) I will not, I dare not lift up my head, my confusion is so great. How great soever my innocency

nocency is, I have little comfort, or 'tis much-what alike with me, whether I be righteous, or wicked. In these places, and by these speeches *Job* seems to put little or no difference between the dealings of God with the wicked and the righteous. Once more. Those words (*Chap.* 9. 28, 29, 30.) are of a like import, *I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent. If I be wicked, why then labour I in vaine? if I wash my self with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own cloaths shall abhorre me.* Saying this, thou hast said, how innocent soever I am, I shall not be dealt with as an innocent; if I make my self never so clean, God will throw me into the ditch, that is, into affliction. From these speeches *Elihu* might charge *Job* with saying, *What profit is it* (as to my temporal good) *that I am cleansed from* spiritual evil, *my sin?* As for his eternal estate, that's not the matter controverted in this book. The summe of all amounts to this, If I am cleansed from my sin, I may be as great a sufferer and as hardly dealt with in this world, as if I were altogether unclean. And hence it might be inferred, Surely *Job* was more righteous than God, because while he laboured to please God as becometh his people and good servants to do, God was pleased (instead of rewarding him, as he had done many, and promised all who do so) to afflict him, as he useth to do and hath threatned to do to the worst of evil men, the wicked. Thus thou hast said, *What advantage*, &c.

The word here rendred *advantage*, signifieth *gain* any way, or any thing that is commodious and gainful to us; thou hast said, *What advantage will it be unto thee?* Thus he brings in *Job* putting the question to himself, what advantage should he get to himself in this life by living a religious or a holy life? As if he had said, Doubtless 'tis concluded in thy breast, thou shalt get none; And to strengthen this thy unbelief, at least to shew that thy unbelief in this poynt is very strong, thou hast said the same thing in another dress of words a second time; For I have heard thee saying thus also.

סכן *profuit contulit, utile commodum fuit.*

What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?

Job was taxed for a saying of the same scandalous sense (*Chap.* 34. 9.) *He hath said, it profiteth a man nothing, that he should delight himself with God.* There *Elihu* accuseth him for affirming in

a third person, *it profiteth a man nothing*; and here for questioning in his own person;

What profit shall I have?

מה אועיל *A radice* יעל *profuit, utilitatem attulit; hinc Belial inutilis.*

Some derive the word *Belial* from this root, signifying *an unprofitable one*, or *an unthrift*, a man that doth no good, either to himself, or others; *What profit shall I have?* what shall I get? All the good I shall get I may put in my eye, and see never the worse: In a word, I shall not mend my condition, if I mend my conversation; so it followeth;

If I be cleansed from my sin.

The words, *If I be cleansed*, are not expresst in the Hebrew Text, but are clearly implyed and understood; For *Job* cannot be supposed to ask this question; *What profit shall I get by, or from my sin?* that question were nothing to the present purpose or disputation. And therefore though all Interpreters do not make this supplement, yet all agree, that a supplement is to be made: Most concur in this, *What profit shall I have, if I depart from, or forsake my sin?* We say, *If I be cleansed from my sin?* As if these were *Jobs* thoughts, this his saying, *Let me keep my sin, or not keep my sin, I see I am like to suffer. I shall still be kept under the rod.* That's the plain sense of the words; *Elihu* chargeth *Job* with complaining of God, that it would be no advantage to him, as to the ease of himself from any outward affliction and calamity, how much soever he forsook or were cleansed from his sin. There are two other readings of this verse, which I shall only name, and then give two or three Notes from our own.

Nam dixtisti, quid profuturum (scilicet justitia tua) sit tibi (item) quid proficiam ex ea) magis quam ex peccato meo Pisc. Rab: Selom:

First, Thus; *Thou hast said, What profit shall I have more by it* (that is, by my righteousness) *than by my sins:* As if his meaning were (which is a very grosse one) *What good shall I get by well-doing more than by ill-doing?* One of the Rabbins takes in strongly with this comparative exposition, between those remotest moral extreams *good* and *evil*, as to his case: But I dare not joyn either with the one or other in this interpretation.

Si roges, quid profuturum sit tibi, dicent, quid proficerem a supplicia mea. Jun:

A second gives it thus; *If thou demandest what may it profit thee, saying, What good shall I get by further punishment or suffering?*

It hath been said before, that those words, *If I be cleansed*, are not

not found expressly in the Hebrew Text; And the word in our Translation rendred *sin*, signifieth also *punishment* or *suffering*, which is the fruit or effect of sin. So that according to this reading, *Elihu* in these words prevents an objection, which *Job* might take occasion to make from what he had said, or wished rather, at the 36th verse of the former Chapter. *My desire is that Job may be tryed unto the end*; That is, further afflicted, or afflicted to the utmost. Against this desire of *Elihu*, *Job* is by him supposed making his exception, or objection, in this verse; As if he had said, Why doest thou, or what reason hast thou to desire that I should be yet again tryed by affliction? What, I pray, would that profit me, if I were afflicted yet more and more? Can the suffering of evil do me good, or make me better? To this objection, *Elihu* gives answer in the next verse, and those which follow to the ninth; and he doth it (as the Asserter of this Interpretation judgeth) by this Dilemma. Thy afflictions would profit either God or thy self (seeing God doth nothing in vaine); but neither thy sufferings, how grievous soever, nor thy doings, how righteous soever, can profit God, no more than thy sins or evil doings can damage God; therefore it remains, that if God afflict thee further, it will be (if thou hast a heart to improve it) for thy profit.

This reading, and the sense arising from it, is much insisted on; but as the former is very harsh, so I conceive, this latter is very dark and intricate, and grounded upon the supposition of an objection very remote, or not easily to be suggested in this discourse. And therefore to avoyd both my own and the readers unnecessary trouble, I shall take the Text, as it stands in our Translation, and offer somewhat for instruction from it.

How great sinfulness there is in saying, *There is no profit in the wayes of God*, I have shewed at the 21st *Chap. vers.* 11th, and *Chap.* 34th *vers.* 9. So that referring the Reader thither, I shall here give only this Note.

It is very sinful to say, we shall get no advantage by leaving sin.

We may well put the Apostles question (*Rom.* 6. 21.) to our selves, *What fruit have we in those things whereof we are now ashamed?* What benefit have we got by polluting our selves with sin? But how vaine a question is it to say, *What profit shall I have,*

if I be cleansed from my sin? Elihu chargeth *Job* with this; yet still remember, he referrs not to his eternal, but temporal condition. And this was *Asaphs* or *Davids* temptation also, as to his temporal condition; even he, the one or the other, *David* or *Asaph* spake as much in expres's terms, as *Job* is here charged with, (*Psal.* 73. 13.) where complaining of the great tryals and troubles he had been under, and of the prosperity of the wicked; *Behold* (saith he) *these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, they increase in riches.* But how is it with me? *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vaine, and washed my hands in innocency; for all the day long have I been plagued, and chastned every moment.* As if he had said, What have I got by my holiness, and forsaking of sin? what have I gained by my strictest walkings, and abstainings from the very appearance of evil? Have I not reason to conclude, in good earnest, that *I have cleansed my heart and hands in vaine,* seeing my sufferings are not lessned, though my sins are; seeing my punishments are renewed every morning, though I am every morning upon the renewal of my repentance? Thus spake the *Psalmist* in the day of his temptation; and doubtless, this day of his Temption had been a day of temptation and provocation to the Lord, (like that of *Israels* in the Wilderness, *Psal.* 95. 7.) had not the Lord come in by his grace, and helped him to bite in his words at the very next verse; *If I say, I will speak thus,* (if I use such, not only uncomely, but wicked language as this, *I have cleansed my heart and hands in vaine*) *Behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.* And *when I thought to know this, it was too wonderful for me*; that is, it was beyond my skill to reconcile these works, these providences of God towards me, with his word and promises; nor was I any whit less at a loss, how to reconcile the prosperity and flourishing condition of wicked men, with those terrible threatnings which the Lord in his Word every where thunders out against them. These cross and intricate dispensations puzzel'd me greatly, put my soul into a maze; nor could I spel their meaning, nor make out the sense of them; *Until I went into the Sanctuary of God, then understood I their end*; the woful Catastrophe, the miserable end of wicked men, their slippery standing, and their sudden falling, as both are described (*v.* 18, 19, 20.) Then also I understood the blessedness of a godly mans estate, both now and for ever, in having God his guide and his portion (*v.* 24,

(*v.* 24, 25, 26.) then I understood what profit and advantage comes by cleansing our selves from sin, though to the eye it appeare not, yea though all appearances speak the contrary. To be cleansed from, or to remove sin is profitable and advantagious:

First, As to the removal of Judgement. When we begin cleansing work, the Lord usually makes an end of afflicting work. For as one great end of sending affliction, is to cleanse us from sin, (*Isa.* 27. 9.) *By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin*; so our being cleansed from sin is usually the end of our afflictions. When we are cleansed from sin, we are troubled no more, we smart no more: speak then, Is it no profit to be cleansed from sin, when so many, not only persons, but Nations have been ruin'd, because not cleansed from sin? God gave his own people cleanness of teeth, (*Amos* 4. 6.) that is, famine or want of bread, because of the uncleanness of their hearts, and lives; and is it no profit to be cleansed from sin, when for our sinfull uncleannesses God will cleanse us of all our comforts, even to a morsel of bread? 'Tis therefore a speech both false in it self, and highly dishonourable unto God, to say, I shall have no profit, for still I shall suffer, though I be cleansed from my sin; whereas first, there is more profit in being cleansed from sin, than in being delivered from sufferings; and, secondly, when once we are cleansed from sin, we are in the fairest way to be cleared from, and see an end of all our sufferings.

Secondly, The more we are cleansed from sin, the more communion we have with God, and the more peace from God. Is not this a great profit? a profit besides the eternal reward? a profit far better than any temporal reward? Will not communion with God satisfie us for the loss of friends, of estate, or health? Will not peace with God answer all the tribulations we can meet with in this world? If therefore being cleansed from sin, we have closer communion and sweeter peace with God, let no man say, *What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?* And, although there should be no present profit, or advantage, though no visible, no nor spiritual income, as to present comfort, should redound to us in this world, by being cleansed from sin, yet remember, it is our profit, and our best profit to be cleansed from sin, to be emptied of sin, to mortifie sin, to destroy sin; if we should have no profit in hand by leaving sin, yet there is a profit promised, that infi-

nitely exceeds all the profits and pleasures which we can have or hope for by retaining our sin; such profit and pleasure, as will abundantly recompence us for all the worldly losses we are at, and penitential sorrows which we pass thorow in keeping or cleansing our selves from sin. The Apostle rejoyced at the sorrow of the *Corinthians* (2 *Cor.* 7. 9.) But is it good to rejoyce at the sorrow of others? should we not mourn with those that mourn? 'Tis true, we should; yet 'tis good to rejoyce in that sorrow which doth others good; such was the sorrow of those *Corinthians*. The Text is express; *Now* (saith St *Paul*) *I rejoyce not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance, for ye were made sorry after a godly manner* (*or according to God*) *that ye might receive damage by us in nothing*. There is then no damage, no hurt by such sorrow; But comes there any good, any profit by it? yes, much every way; *for* (as it followeth, *v.* 10.) *godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of*; that is, greatly to be rejoyced in. What is matter of joy, if salvation be not? True repentance for sin, is repentance to salvation: And is there not profit, is there not all profit in that? As there is a *Fountain opened* (the blood of Christ) *for sin and for uncleanness* (Zech: 13. 1.) that is, for washing away the uncleanness of sin; so there are abundance of blessings flowing from that Fountain, to all such as by the actings of Faith and Repentance wash and are clean.

Thus far of *Elihu's* first charge, and the proof of it, taken from *Jobs* own sayings. How he answers and refutes those sayings of *Job*, will appear in opening the next words.

JOB,

JOB, Chap. 35. Vers. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

4. *I will answer thee, and thy Companions with thee.*

5. *Look unto the Heavens, and see, and behold the Clouds which are higher than thou.*

6. *If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplyed, what dost thou unto him?*

7. *If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?*

8. *Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.*

THe former Context contained the Charge which *Elihu* brought against *Job*, that he should say, *His righteousness was more than Gods*, and that *it would be no profit to him; if he were cleansed from his sin.*

In the Context of these five Verses, *Elihu* gives answer to those (had *Job* positively and purposely said, or asserted them) blasphemous sayings, or assertions. And we have here

First, The promise or overture of an answer, at the 4th verse, *I will answer thee, and thy Companions with thee.*

Secondly, We have the answer it self laid down in the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th verses; which answer consists in three particulars.

First, That God cannot be hurt or endammag'd by our sin; at the 6th verse.

Secondly, That God can have no benefit or advantage by our righteousness; at the 7th verse.

Thirdly, That both *Job* himself, and other men like himselfe may, yea shall certainly have hurt and dammage by their sin, as also benefit or advantage by their righteousness, vers. 8th.

Thus *Elihu's* answer obviates *Job's* passionate question at the 3d verse, *What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?* As if *Elihu* had said, *I know that neither thy sins can do any hurt to God, nor can thy righteousnesse do him any good; but thy sins may hurt*

hurt thee, and thy righteousnesse advantage thy self; therefore lay down such wicked and desperate thoughts as these, say not, What profit will redound to me if I be cleansed from my sin? &c. That's his answer, according to our Translation. Other readings present us with other forms of answer; but I shall not stay upon them.

Vers. 4. *I will answer thee, and thy Companions with thee.*

Elihu makes overture of answering before he answers, and tells him he will, before he doth it; *I will answer thee*, or *I will return thee words*. Answering is the returning of words to words; yet not of empty words, but of words fill'd with Reason and Authority to resolve him that is doubting, or to convince him that is gain-saying. *I will answer thee,*

And thy Companions with thee.

I will speak that which shall not only take off thy Objections, but theirs also who are of thy mind, or joyn in Opinion with thee; *I will answer thee, and thy Companions with thee*: I will do both at once; when I have answered thee, they also will be answered; one answer will serve thee and them. One Line will mark and measure both Walls.

Una fidelis duos parietes dealbabo. Druf.

The word which we render *Companions*, signifies any Friends or Familiars, with whom we usually converse, with whom we eat, or who eat bread with us, (2 *Sam.* 13. 3.) (*Prov.* 17. 17.) We may take it either more strictly for a special intimate bosome friend, who is to a man as his own soul, as *Moses* speaks (*Deut.* 13. 6.) or for a friend at large, such as is called a *Neighbour*, (Exod. 20. 16.) Levit. 19. 18.

רעה *Socius amicus, familiaris qui simul pascitur, convictor.*

Yet the question may be, Whom doth *Elihu* mean by *Jobs* Companions, when he saith, *I will answer thee, and thy Companions with thee?*

Some by *his Companions* understand those who came to visit him in his affliction, and maintained that long Discourse with him, those three friends of whom we read (Chap. 2. 11.) *Eliphaz* the *Temanite*, *Bildad* the *Shuite*, and *Zophar* the *Naamathite*. The Septuagint conclude *Elihu* meant them only, for thus they render, *I will answer thee, and thy three friends.*

Καὶ τοῖς τρισὶ φίλοις σου. Sept.

But why should *Elihu* joyn them with *Job*, seeing they held Opinions contrary to *Job*? True, they did, yet they were not able

able to make good their Arguments, or convince *Job*; they had condemned *Job*, but not answered him, they did their business imperfectly, and to halves, or impertinently, and to no purpose; so that all their answerings were called *no answer*, Chap. 32. 3. And therefore *Elihu* might see reason to undertake the satisfaction, not only of *Job*, but of his three friends, who had not given *Job* a satisfactory answer unto that hour.

Others take the word *Companions* in a more large sence, for all that were of his Opinion. As if *Elihu* had said, I challenge all the world, whosoever accompanies thee, or takes thy part in justifying such sayings or assertions, as I have heard from thee, I will answer them all, how many soever they be; I will undertake thee, and all thy Party, *Thee, and thy Companions with thee.*

Hence Note,

He who hath truth on his side, needs not fear the opposition of many, no nor the opposition of all men.

To oppose two is a very great disadvantage; but if a man have the truth on his side, he may oppose all, though he be alone: He may be an *Antipas* (Revel. 2. 13.) a man against all men, as that name of Christs *faithful Martyr*, there mentioned, doth import. If there be a thousand of them, he may undertake them all, for in answering one, he answers all. *Elijah* said of himself (1 *Kings* 18. 22.) *I, even I only, remain a Prophet of the Lord*; yet he stood up against all the Idolatrous Prophets of *Baal*, who were no fewer than *four hundred and fifty men*: That we have many with us, is little advantage, and lesse honour many a time. A long train of Followers will do us no good, if our Cause be bad. Truth is strong and will prevail; 'tis vain to fight against it, though our partakers are many. The ancient Fathers observed, how some were wont to cry up those that had the multitude on their side, and to boast that most were of their Opinion. It was the saying of a Worthy in those times, *By my being alone, the word of truth, and the truth of the word, is not at all diminished.* One man and the truth are strong enough to oppose a multitude in error, and a multitude of errors. The more any men, and the more men appear in opposing truth, the more is God engaged in faithfulness to appear for it. When one boasted to St *Hierome* that he had a multitude of Followers in his Opinion; he answered, *That the*

Non mea solitudine minuitur verbum veritatis. Dictum Liberii ad Constantium Arrianum. Theod. lib. 2. Histor. Eccl. c. 16.

Multitudo sociorum te nequaquam Catholicum, sed Hæreticum monstrabit. Hieron. l. 3. *advers.* Pelag.

the number of his Companions did not prove him a Catholick, but a Heretick.

But how did *Elihu* answer *Job* and his Companions? The next verse tells us how.

Vers. 5. *Look unto the Heavens, and see, behold the Clouds which are higher than thou.*

נכט *Aspexit aliquando ab oculis ad intellectum transfertur.*

Toto cœlo erras.

As if he had said, *Look to the Heavens, and they'l answer thee; behold the Clouds, and they will confute thee: Thy very senses may convince thee, that thou hast spoken these things against Reason. And the Heavens will tell thee, that thy mistake in this matter is Heavenly wide. If thou turn thy eyes upward, and considerest that distance which is between God, who hath Heaven for the Habitation of his Holinesse, and of his Glory, and thee, who dwellest in thy house of Clay here on Earth, thou mayest see that thy sins cannot hurt him, nor thy goodnesse extend to him.* The distance between Heaven and man is very great; but the distance between God and man is far greater; the one is immensurable, but the other is unimaginable, unconceiveable. Therefore if the Heavens be so high, that thou canst not annoy them with thine Arrows, much lesse art thou able to annoy God, who is higher, and infinitely more out of Bow-shot and Gun-shot than the Heavens: That's the scope of his Argumentation here, to prove that *Job* could not, or that no man can hurt God by his sin.

Look to the Heavens, and see.

Both words are applyed to the sense or sight of the eye, yet they have a reference also to an intellectual sight, to the eye of the mind: *Look, and see*; that is, Take special notice of, and contemplate the Heavens. We may look, and not see; that is, look and not consider, look and not observe: To look and see, is to give earnest attention to the thing looked upon; look curiously, critically, how high the Heavens are, *Look and see.*

ראה *Significat curiose inspicere, intueri visa, contemplare mente.* Aquin.

We may apply the first word *Look* (as some do) to the truth of the thing, look how high the Heavens are; it may be seen by the eye, that they are very high, though we cannot see how high they are. The latter word *See*, may referre to the admirable contrivance and contexture of the thing seen, as the former to the truth and reallity of it: Look and see how wonderful, how full of wonders

wonders the Heavens are; see with admiration what a vastness, what an exactnesse there is in the Heavens above thee. Thus the word is used by the Prophet, (*Isa.* 42. 18.) *Look ye blind, that ye may see.* It is a Prophesie of Gospel times: that is, Consider the Messages and Mysteries of the Gospel exactly, view them well, that ye who are blind may behold the glorious light that shines forth in them. There were many blind ones in Christs time, that looked upon the things of the Gospel, and did not see; the Pharisees lookt upon them, and they were among the blind ones; they indeed had better thoughts of themselves, and therefore put that question to Christ in scorn, (*John* 9. 40.) *Are we blind also?* They did not look so as to see; they were blind when they looked, and blind after they looked: The holy Prophet exhorts poor blind souls to whom the Gospel should come, to look better, to look again and again, till they saw, *Look ye blind, that ye may see*; That is, be diligent and humble, that ye may see the light shining in the Gospel. The proud Pharisees who would not see the light which Christ offered to them, were the worst of blind ones.

This is the *Look* which the word in the Text calls for. *Look unto the Heavens, and see*; it cannot be understood of the outward sight only, for he that looks upon the Heavens cannot but see them; but a man may look a great while upon the Heavens, and not see them considerately, nor understand what he seeth. The words import attention and consideration: And so they are used and placed (2 *Kings* 3. 14.) *Were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the King of Judah, I would not look unto thee, nor see thee*; said *Elisha* to *Jehoram* King of *Israel*; that is, I would give thee no respect, nor take notice of thee. In this sense the Prophet represents the Church bespeaking the incompassionate Spectators of her calamity, (*Lam.* 1. 12.) *Is it nothing to you, all ye that passe by? Behold and see* (that is, weigh it well, and consider) *if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow. Look unto the Heavens and see.*

שור *Intentis oculis intuitus est.*

Nomen hoc שחקים *non potest significare Nubes, quæ sunt substantiæ densæ, nempe Aer condensatus: At Shehhakim dicti sunt a substantiæ tenuitate, qualis est substantia cœli; ergo verto tenues cœlos.*

And *Behold* (with like attention) *the Clouds.* There is some difference among Interpreters, about this word which we render *Clouds*. The Hebrew properly signifies *Thinnes*; but a Cloud, is thick, and consists of many Aireal vapors, condensed into a body; and therefore this word cannot well be translated a *Cloud*, (saith this Author) but the *thin Heavens*, that is, the higher Heavens, those above the Airy Heaven.

Again, Pisc.

שחקים *w plurimum Æthera & nubes significat.* Bold.

Again, The *Clouds* are lower than the Heavens, they are neerest to us, they are ingendred in the middle Region, nor do they at any time rise higher than that Region. Forasmuch then as *Elihu* is endeavouring by the consideration of the highness of Gods royal seat, or of the vast distance (as the Prophet speaks) of the habitation of his Holiness and of his Glory from us, to prove, that neither any good we do can profit him, nor any evil we do, reach to his disadvantage; therefore it may seem not to make much for the purpose of *Elihu*, to call *Job* to behold the Clouds, which are neer us, comparatively, though their distance from us be really very great: but I conceive, notwithstanding that Criticisme of the word, and this reason, we may well enough abide by the Translation, which saith, *Behold the Clouds*; for though the Clouds are thicker than the Air, yet they are but thin, and are soon dispersed by winde and rarified by heate.

Again, Supposing (as indeed they do) that the Clouds move in the lower part of the Heavens, it encreaseth and hightens the sense of the words to the purpose, for which *Elihu* makes use of them. As if he had said, Behold and see the Heavens, the upper Heavens, the Starry Heavens, they are higher than thou, yea, behold the Clouds which are neerest to us, and much, very much below the Starrs, those especially which Astronomers call the *fixed Starrs*; yet do but behold the Clouds, which at the top of some hills one may touch with his hand, (some describe great men hiding their heads among the Clouds) Behold, I say, the Clouds which are lowest, yet they are higher than thou, they are beyond thy reach; much more the Heavens, most of all God, who is higher than the highest Heavens. Thou canst neither add to, nor diminish or blemish the beauty of the Heavens, thou canst not make a cloud better or worse; What then canst thou do to or against the God of Heaven? To convince *Job* of this, is the purpose of *Elihu* in calling him to the view of the Heavens. Now forasmuch as *Elihu* invites *Job* to the view and Contemplation of the Heavens;

Note; First,

It is our duty to study and meditate the natural works of God, or his works in Nature; Especially the Heavens, which are so eminent a part of his works.

The Scripture calls some, *Starr-gazers*, such are they, who study

study the Heavens to a very evil purpose, drawing men off from their sole dependance upon God, by foretelling the events of things, and destinies of persons, from the positions and motions of the heavenly Bodies or Luminaries. This kind of Studying and Contemplating the Heavens, is one of the greatest vanities under Heaven, a vanity often reproved in the Scriptures of the holy Prophets; thus to be *Starr-gazers*, or *Heaven-beholders* is our sin: but there is a Contemplation of the Starrs which is our duty and commendation, (*Psal.* 8. 3, 4.) *When I consider* (in that great volume of the works of God) *the Heavens, the work of thy fingers, the Moon and the Starrs which thou hast ordained*; *What is man that thou art mindfull of him*, &c. *David* did both look and see, he beheld the Heavens for a good purpose, a godly purpose, his own abasement, and the advancement of the glory and goodness, or of the glorious goodness of God, in spreading such a Canopy, sparkling with perpetual fires for him to walk under, and do his work by. And doubtless, did we with enlightned eyes behold and see the natural Heavens, we should become more spiritual and heavenly.

Secondly, In that we have here three words, *look*, *see*, and *behold*. Note,

The works of God, Especially the Heavens, are diligently to be Considered.

We may look to the Heavens and not see, we may see the Heavens and not behold them. Let me here again mind the Reader of the Emphasis of that word; it notes a looking unto, or upon the Object, as a Hunter looks for a Hare, or a Fowler for a Bird; how doth he pry and look into every tuft and bush? So the word is used (*Jer.* 5. 26.) *Among my people are found wicked men: they lay waite* (or they eye and behold) *as one that setteth snares, they set a trap, they catch men.* All the visible works of God, much more the Heavens should be diligently considered, *looke into, seen, and beheld.* It was a good Conclusion of one of the Ancients, who said, *That man hath not looked unto Heaven, that hath only looked upon Heaven.* A bare look is not sufficient, he must look with admiration, or till he cannot forbeare to admire, as the first Latine word in that sentence signifies properly. A man may look upon a Picture, and yet not behold it discerningly; he may say, that's the

In cœlum non suspicit, qui cœlum tantum aspicit. Origen.

picture of a man, yet not consider the Art of the workman in drawing it; he may see it is the picture of a man, not of a beast, at a look, but he must see it exactly, if he would find out the worth and workmanship of it. A man in passage (as some speak) may see a house, yet not apprehend the Symmetry of the Plat-form, the skill of the Architect, nor the commodiousnesse of its Scituation; to discern these calls for serious consideration, and setled reviews. As in the Natural works of God, the Heavens made for man, so much more in his Spiritual works, the making of a Heaven in man, or man Heavenly, require our deepest thoughts, and most studious re-searches. O how many are there who look transiently upon those works of God, who never see nor behold them, never enter into the secrets of them! many know some Truths, yet never looked into any, nor laboured to *comprehend with all Saints* (or as all Saints ought to do) *what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height* of them; and therefore attain not to that *riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ*, as the Apostle speaks (*Col.* 2. 2.) but are *like children tossed to and fro, and carryed about with every wind of Doctrine*, as the same Apostle describes them, *Eph.* 4. 14. Remember, we are to *look* and *see*, and *behold* the Natural works of God, how much more the Spiritual Mysteries of the Gospel, and the works of grace? these indeed are to be looked upon, and seen, and beheld, those other are not to be left unlooked upon.

Note, Thirdly,

The Heavens are a Divine Glasse, wherein we may see much of God; they are a Natural Alphabet, the Letters whereof being well placed, and rightly put together, we may spell the name of God, his Wisdome, Power, and Goodnesse.

Thus the Apostle argues (*Rom.* 1. 19, 20.) *That which may be known of God is manifest in them*, or *to them*; that is, to the very Heathens. His proof for this, is taken from the poynt now proposed: For *the invisible things of him from the Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and God-head.* The Apostle layes it down in general, Whatsoever is made, whatsoever is part of the Creation, holds out somewhat of God: The very Clods of the Earth

Earth declare his Power; how much more the Clouds and Starrs of Heaven? Therefore *Look to the Heavens, Behold the Clouds*, consider them, (*Psal.* 19. 2.) *They declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his handy-work.* If you ask more particularly, what do they declare? I answer, First, That God is; every Creature doth so; if there be a Creature, there must needs be a Creator; If there be Effects, there must be an Efficient; the made Heavens declare their Maker. Secondly, The Heavens declare, not only that God is, but that he is above. Christ hath taught us to pray, *Our Father, which art in Heaven*; God is every where, yet there especially; Heaven is the Habitation of his Holinesse, and of his Glory. Thirdly, In the purity of the Heavens, we may see the holinesse and purity of God; and they being so incorruptible and unchangeable, declare Fourthly, The incorruptibility and unchangeablenesse of God: He that made them such, is much more such himself. The very unchangeablenesse of the Heavens, is changeable, compared with the unchangeablenesse of God. *The Heavens* (saith *David*, Psal. 102. 25, 26.) *are the work of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou shalt endure* (or *stand*), *yea all of them shall wax old like a Garment: as a Vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.* Fifthly, The Heavens which God hath built as a House for himself, being so high above the touch of the Creature, shew us that God is infinitely exalted above the reach and molestation of sinful man; that's the thing which *Elihu* aims at, as appears by what followeth in the next words. *Look to the Heavens, and see, behold the Clouds which are higher than thou.*

Vers. 6. *If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplyed, what dost thou unto him?*

As if he had said, *When thou lookest to the Heavens, thou plainly seest thou canst do nothing against them; it would be a vain thing for thee to attempt the Heavens, to clamber up to the Clouds; surely then, thy sinnings, thy frettings, thy discontents, and complaints cannot hurt God; therefore be quiet.*

If thou sinnest.

The word here used, notes sin in the least degree, any error or deviation

Error.

deviation from the Rule; but it comprehends sins of the highest degree, even such as the Prophet calls (*Amos* 5.12.) *Mighty sins.* If thou sinnest at the greatest rate, at the height of blasphemy,

What dost thou against him?

בוע Non tam nocere, quam opprimere et laborare significat. q. d. Laborando et admitendo quid tandem efficies quo illum lædas. Pined.

The Hebrew is, *What workest thou against him?* Properly the word signifieth only to work; we render it *by working against*, that is, to the hurt and disadvantage of another, to his mischief and undoing. As if he had said, *If thou shouldest set thy shoulder to the work, if thou shouldest do evil with both hands greedily, yet thou canst make no work of it in this matter, what dost thou against him? what hurt hath he by it?* And to assure *Job* that he hath none, nor can have any, *Elihu* serves him up the same Messe in another Dish of words, in the close of the verse.

Or if thy transgressions be multiplyed.

Here *Elihu* speaks as high, as he meant before. Transgressing is more than ordinary sinning, though (as was touch upon the word) under sinning he comprehended any, the most extraordinary transgressings. If thy sins be transgressions, rebellions, or prevarications, and they be multiplyed, if thou sinnest out of malice and wrathful purpose against God himself; and dost not only commit some one of these, but many, and heapest them up together, yet &c.

רבו Et ad modum et numerum communis est.

If thy transgressions be multiplyed. The word signifies both magnitude and multitude; hence some render, *If thy transgressions be great*; we say, *If they be many.* Sin as much as thou wilt, and sin as often as thou wilt; sin as much as thou canst, what hurt hath God by it? Some by sin in the former part of the verse, understand that evil which is committed immediately against God; and by *transgressions* in this latter clause, such evils as are done against our neighbour: But I see no need at all to be so distinct, we may take it respecting God, or man, or both; for those sins which we commit against man, are also against God; he is the person offended, his Law is broken, against whomsoever the sin is committed. *If thou multiply thy transgressions,*

What dost thou unto him?

מה תעשה לו

That word, *What dost thou?* signifies not only, or not so much, strong

strong labour and endeavour, as the former did, but cunning in labour, and skill in labour. As if he had said, *Though a man set all his wits awork to do evil, what can he do to him? Neither pains nor skill, neither industry nor policy, neither open force nor secret stratagems, can do him any, the least annoyance.* Some Creatures are weak and inconsiderable, as to any thing they can do by outward power, yet they can do much by their subtilty, and cunning; but neither the one, nor the other can do any thing unto God. Screw up thy wits to the highest pin, or peg, yet thou canst do nothing really prejudicial unto him. The words are plain; from them

Observe, First,

God receives no dammage by the sin of man, how great, or how many soever his sins are.

A man may quickly vex and undo himself by sin. Wisdome saith (*Prov.* 8. 36.) *He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul: All they that hate me, love death.* But the sinner cannot hurt God, he is far above us; man can no more hurt God by sin, than he can hurt the Clouds, or the highest Heavens. Hid we an enemy above the Clouds, were it not a madnesse to shoot arrows, or bend our forces against him? What is man to God! The School-man concludes, *Nothing can be added to, nothing can be diminished, nothing taken from God by any act of man: Yet man, as much as in him lyes, takes away from, and gives or brings to God, when he either keeps, or doth not keep that order which God hath appointed.* Sinners shall be judged and dealt with, as they that have greatly annoyed and disadvantaged God, as they that have rob'd and spoyl'd him, as they that have smitten and wounded him, as they that have abased him, and laid him low: And there is reason they should be judged as having done so, forasmuch as they do their utmost to do so. Thus they are described (*Psal.* 2. 1, 2.) *The Heathen rage, and the People imagine a vain thing. The Kings of the Earth set themselves, and the Rulers,* &c. And why all this? what was it for? *It was against the Lord, and against his Anointed.* This was done by the Princes and Great Ones of the world; yet they were so far from being able to prejudice the Lord, either in his Person, or in his Interest, that he did but laugh at them for it. And 'tis considerable that God is described there, (according

Per actum hominis Deo nihil potest accrescere vel deperire; Sed tamen homo in quantum in se est, aliquid subtrahit Deo, vel ei exhibet, cum servat vel non servat ordinem quem Deus Instituit. Aquin. 1. 2dæ. q. 21. Art. 4. Ad primum.

(according to the notion uſed by *Elihu* in the Text) ſitting in the Heavens, (verſ. 4.) *He that ſitteth in the Heavens ſhall laugh, the Lord ſhall have them in deriſion.* And why doth the Lord laugh? ſurely becauſe he ſees they can no more hurt or hinder him in his purpoſes, by any of, or all their ſinful adviſings, and attemptings, than if they ſhould hope to batter down the Heavens by diſcharging a Pot-gun againſt them. And therefore he concludes with a triumphant *Yet*, (ver. 6.) *Yet have I ſet my King* (after you have done your worſt) *upon my holy Hill of Sion.* The ſins of men do turn to the glory of God, but to their own ſhame. The ſins of Gods own children turn to the glory of his mercy; thoſe huge heaps, and numberleſs numbers of ſins committed by his Children before Converſion, what do they in the iſſue, but lift up the glory of his Grace in the pardon of them? And the rebellions committed by impenitent ſinners, going on in obſtinacy to the end, without Converſion, what do they but lift up the glory of God in his Juſtice, and wonderful judgements, which he will bring upon them? The ſins of the old world (which was a world of ſin, all fleſh having corrupted their way before God, and there being but one righteous Family found in it) all thoſe ſins (I ſay) did not dammage God at all, but indeed they glorified both his Patience and his Juſtice; his Patience, in ſparing them ſo long, even an hundred and twenty years after warning given; his Juſtice, in ſending the Flood at laſt, which brought ſwift deſtruction upon them, and ſwept them all away. The unnatural crying ſins of *Sodome*, did not hurt the God of Heaven, but God took advantage thereby, to glorifie his Juſtice, in raining Fire and Brimſtone upon them from Heaven, (*Gen.* 19. 24.) *Pharaoh* by all his oppoſition againſt the *Iſrael* of God, did not diſadvantage God, but gave him an advantage to make his Power known, by ſwallowing up him and his *Egyptian* Hoſt in the waters of the Red Sea. That which is done againſt the Will of God, fulfills the Will of God. The ſins of men are ſo far from hurting the God of Heaven, that they glorifie him among men on Earth; while they behold him either turning the evil which is done into good, or puniſhing them for their evil doings. That which men ſpeak or do againſt God, like an Arrow ſhot up into the Ayre, falls down upon their own heads. *David* (*Pſ.* 111. 2.) breaks out wonderfully into the praiſe of God upon this conſideration. *The works of the Lord are great, ſought*

ſought out of all them that have pleaſure in them. Theſe works of God wherein we ſhould take pleaſure, are not only works of mercy to the Godly, (*verſ.* 3, 4, 5.) but of vengeance upon the wicked, (*verſ.* 6.) *He hath ſhewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the Heathen. The works of his hands are Verity and Judgement,* (verſ. 7.) That is, judgement for Saints in ſaving them, and upon ſinners in conſuming them. We ſhould much contemplate the works of God, in bringing glory to himſelf out of the ſins of men. The Angels ſinned and fell; man ſinned as ſoon almoſt as he was ſet up: Theſe Creatures did that which God would not have done, yet God brought about what he would. And thus it is to this day among all the children of men; while they break holy Commandements, God fulfills his holy Counſels; no thanks to them, yea woe to them. So then, the Lord hath no hurt by ſin; which way ſoever ſinners turn themſelves, they cannot turn away his Counſels, nor turn from his Counſels: When they are diſobeying his revealed will, he is doing his ſecret will, in which God is moſt righteous, and in his ſeaſon will lift up his Righteouſneſſe and Holineſſe, his righteous and holy Will, in the face of all the ſinners in the world, and they ſhall know and confeſſe that he hath ſerved his own wiſe and holy purpoſes, even in thoſe Providences wherein they have had no purpoſe, but to ſerve their fooliſh and unholy luſts and pleaſures. We have an illuſtrious proof of this, in that extreamly evil and unnatural practiſe of men good in the main, the holy Patriarchs, againſt their own Brother (*Gen.* 50. 20) who told them plainly, when he meant them no evil, but good, *But as for you, ye thought evil againſt me, but God meant it for good; to bring to paſs, as it is this day, to ſave much people alive.*

De eo quod agitur contra Dei voluntatem, voluntas ipſius vel mala in bonum convertentis vel mala puniendo implentis. Auguſt. Enchirid. c. 100.

Miro et ineffabili modo, non fit præter ejus voluntatem, quod etiam contra ejus voluntatem fit; quia non fieret, ſi non ſineret: nec utiq; noluus ſinit ſed volens. Nec ſineret bona fieri male, niſi omnipotens etiam de malo facere poſſet bene. Auguſt. in Pſal. 111.

Further, To clear the Point in general, we may diſtinguiſh of ſin, as having a threefold oppoſition; Firſt, Againſt our ſelves. Secondly, Againſt our Neighbour. Thirdly, Againſt God. This diviſion or diſtinction of ſins, muſt be ſo underſtood that the two former, namely, ſin againſt our ſelves, and againſt our Neighbour, brings a real detriment, and diſadvantage to our ſelves, and to our Neighbour. But as ſin hath reſpect to God, it doth not bring any real detriment to him: Only it may be ſaid, Firſt, The will of many ſinners is raiſed up to that height of wickedneſſe, as purpoſely to ſet themſelves to diſhonour God, to blaſpheme his

name, and *do despight to the Spirit of Grace*, (Heb. 10. 29.) which is the utmost length that sin or lust can go. Secondly, The nature of every sin, or every sin considered in its nature, is a wrong or a hurt to God; for it is an unconformity to his Will, and a breach of his Law: Yet as to himself God receives no hurt, nor possibly can receive hurt by any, the foulest, most sinful sin.

But some may say, *Doth not sin damage God at all; could Elihu say in Truth, What dost thou against him, or into him, if thou sinnest?* Is sin nothing to God? The Church complained, and cryed out to those that passed by her, (*Lam.* 1. 12.) *Is it nothing to you, all ye that passe by?* Are all my afflictions nothing to you? May not God say much more, Are all your transgressions nothing unto me? Are our sins nothing to him? Is he unconcerned in them? How can this be? There are several Scripture-Expressions which shew clearly that we do much against God when we sin, and much for him when we sin not, or abstain from sin.

First, When a People, especially when a professing People, sin, *The name of God is prophaned*; and is that nothing to God? Is it not against God, to have his name prophaned? We find the Lord charging this upon his People (*Ezek.* 36. 20, 21.) *They prophaned my name among the Heathen*, &c. To prophane the name of God, is to make it as an unholy, as a common, yea, as a corrupt thing; and is this nothing to God?

Secondly, To sin is to *dishonour God*, 'tis called, *A despising of God*, (1 *Sam.* 2. 30.) *Them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.* Is it nothing to be despised, to be dishonoured? If a man be despised, he thinks himself wronged; losse of honour is a great losse.

Thirdly, We find in Scripture, that some kind of sinning is *blaspheming*. The Apostle tels the *Jews* (*Rom.* 2. 24.) *The name of God is blaspheмed among the Gentiles, through you*: That is, his name is evil spoken of, a bad report is brought upon his name, he hears ill among evil men, *among the Gentiles, through you*, that is, through the unanswerablenesse of your doings, to your sayings, or through the unlikenesse of your practises, to your profession. To blaspheme the name of God is to strike through, to wound the name of God; it is somewhat to a man to have his name struck through with the poysoned Arrows and Darts of reproach. An ill tongue falls heavy, and cuts deep. A blasphemed name is a tongue-

tongue-beaten name: And is this nothing to God?

Fourthly, Some sins are not only in themselves a contempt of God, but they are committed in contempt of God. When men sin presumptuously, and with a high hand; when they sin with a command shining in their eye, with a threat sounding in their ear, they even send a defiance to Heaven, and bid God do his worst: And is this nothing against God? nothing unto God? One of the Ancients writing at large of two Cityes, calleth one of them, *The earthly and unholy City, made by the love of our selves, even to the loathing and contempt of God.* (Love to our selves, rising up to the contempt of God, doth all the mischief in the world) The other City he calleth *holy and heavenly, and that* (saith he) *is built by the love of God, or when we love God even to a loathing and contempt of our selves, and of all our own concernments, interests and advantages.* When a man comes to love God with a loathing of himself, then he is indeed a builder of the holy City: And when sinners act with an inordinate love to themselves, they at once cast contempt upon God, and build that bad City; and is this nothing to God? Augustinus, l. 14. De Civitate Dei. cap. 28.

Fifthly, The Scripture saith, *God is angry with sin.* A wise man will not be angry with that which is nothing to him, or which doth nothing against him; a wise man will not be angry for nothing, much lesse will the only wise God.

Sixthly, The Scripture saith, *God is grieved for the sins of men.* Surely God will not be grieved for that which is nothing unto him. Himself saith, sinners *fret him*, (Ezek. 16. 43.) *Thou hast fretted me in all these things.* A well tempered man will not fret for that which doth not some way or other afflict him. We read (*Isa.* 63. 10.) That *Israel vexed his holy Spirit so much, that he was turned to be their enemy, and fought against them.* And had they done nothing against him? Yea, it is said (*Gen.* 6. 6) God was so much afflicted with the sins of the old world, that *he repented that he had made man upon the Earth, and it grieved him at his heart.* Doubtless that is somewhat to God, which grieves him thus, and goes to his very heart. And let us take heed of thinking sin is nothing to God; though *Elihu* saith here to *Job*, *What dost thou unto him, if thou sinnest?* Sin hath done all the mischief to man that ever was done him, nor can any thing do him a mischief, but his sin. And though God, as *Elihu* argueth truly, be a-

above the reach of any mischief that sin or sinners can do him, yet upon tryal they will be found guilty of, and cast for doing much, and that very mischievously against God. And therefore

For answer to the Objection, know, The glory of God may be considered two wayes; First, In it self. Secondly, In its manifestations: Or, we may consider God, First, In his Essential glory and blessednesse; Secondly, In his manifestative glory and blessednesse. The Glory and Majesty of God in it self, or his Essential Glory is always the same, and receives neither encrease nor diminution; for 'tis infinite and perfect, or infinitely perfect; and that's the definition of *Perfection*, or defined perfection, to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken. So then, Consider God in himself, and 'tis true, our sins are nothing to him, they hurt him no more than the Starres are hurt by throwing stones into the Ayre at them, or the Sun is hurt by casting Darts up at it, or the Moon is hurt by the barking of Dogs at it; we can no more hurt or hinder that good or glory of God by our sins, than Sun, Moon and Starres in Heaven, are hurt or hindred in their Course, by such angry assaults from Earth.

But

Secondly, Consider the manifestations of the glory of God, and this is hindred, or damaged by sin. That's the meaning of all those Scriptures, where 'tis said, *his name is prophaned, dishonoured, blasphemed*; the present manifestations of his glory, which should break out every where, are clouded and eclipsed by sin. And this, their sins do especially who professe his name. Professors are oblieged where-ever they come, to hold out the favour and excellency of his name: And therefore God will deal with knowing sinners, as with those that hurt and wound him, as with those that have grieved and broken him, as with those who have burdened and troubled him, yea, as with those who would destroy him. Sin is an enemy to God, and would dethrone and thrust him out of the world; therefore sinners shall be dealt with as such as have highly hurt and wronged God. Sinners have sometimes risen up to such expressions of wickednesse, that they would even pull God out of Heaven; it is in the nature of every sin, and in the spirit of many sinners to do so, they carry a dayly enmity in their hearts.

Peccatum vocatur Deicidium appetens sc: Deum destruere.

There-

Therefore woe to those who say of God, God is not hurt by our sins? why then should we trouble our selves about them? yes, the Lord will at last let all sinners know he hath been concerned in their sins; though they have not at all toucht his Essential Glory, yet they have darkned and slurr'd the manifestations of his Glory. And therefore I answer,

Secondly, All those Scriptures before alledged, importing that sin grieves God, vexes him, and is very burthensome to him; all those are spoken either of *God-man, Jesus Christ*, who was made like unto us in all things, except sin, and is spoken of in the Historyes and Prophesies of the Old Testament, before he took flesh, as having those (in him) sinlesse passions of anger, and sorrow, and grief, which were found in him after he appeared in the flesh: Or if expounded of God, strictly considered, then what is in those Scriptures spoken of God, must be understood after the manner of men, yet as becomes God, who is without all passions and repentings: Or they are to be understood, not as importing Affections in God, but Effects upon men. When men sin, God doth such things as angry men use to do, such things as men do that are grieved with what others have done, and repent of what themselves have done. If grief, anger, repentance, were properly wrought in God, when we sin, our sins must needs be some, yea much annoyance to him. But while man sees and feels such Effects as these passions produce, the Lord is infinitely exalted above the least feeling of these passions, he remains ever the same: That's it which *Elihu* signifieth, and holds out to *Job*; we may trouble one another, and trouble our selves by sin, but we cannot at all trouble God. *If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him, what unto him?* I shall conclude, and gather up the sence of this Context in these four brief Deductions. Take two of them Negatively, and two Affirmatively.

Hæc de Deo dicuntur ἀνθρωποπαθῶς et intelligenda sunt Scripturæ.

First, *God doth not punish sinners in anger, only, though he be angry only with sin.*

Secondly, *God doth not punish sinners, at all, for fear.* He fears none, whom none can hurt.

The two Affirmatives take thus:

First, When God punisheth sin, he doth it out of pure love to Justice, or purely out of love to Justice.

Secondly, God afflicts the godly in mercy; 'tis not because they have done him hurt, but for their good.

Elihu

Elihu proceeds further to prove, that as *Job* could not hurt God by his sins, so his righteousness and innocency were no advantage to him; and therefore it must needs follow, that his sins could only hurt, and his righteousness only profit himself, and such as were like himself.

Vers. 7. *If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? and what receiveth he at thy hands?*

Vers. 8. *Thy wickedness may hurt a man, as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.*

Elihu having shewed in the former verse, that the sin of man cannot detract any thing from, nor in the least hinder the happiness of God; proceeds in the 7th verse to shew, that the sinlessness, yea that the righteousness of man cannot advantage, nor advance the happiness of God: And therefore lest he should seem to make both the sin and the righteousness of man to be of no use, he states the matter in the 8th verse, and tells us both to whom the wickedness of man is hurtfull, and to whom the righteousness of man is profitable; *Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man*; but neither can thy wickedness hurt, nor thy righteousness help or advantage God. That's the summe of these two verses.

Vers. 7. *If thou be righteous, what givest thou him?*

As if he had said; *There is no reason (O Job) that thou shouldest at any time (as thou oftentimes hast) proclaim thy own righteousness, as if that added any thing to God.* *Job* was not ignorant of that; But the speech of *Elihu* had this scope in it, to reprove him for complaining that his goodness profited himself nothing, because though he was far from wickedness, yet he was afflicted, whereas many wicked men prospered and lived in full content; to which point his other friends had not answered. And further, *Elihu* urgeth *Job* with this, because he had so industriously defended his own righteousness, as if he would intimate that God was a gainer by it; whereas if God at any time rewardeth our good deeds, that proceedeth from his own goodness and Free Grace, not from any obligation which we have put upon him, by what we have done, how well soever we have done it. *If thou be righteous, what givest thou him?* This supposition, *if thou be righteous*, hath in it a

a grant, if not an affirmation, that a man may be righteous; For though all men naturally, or in nature, are unrighteous, yet thorough grace all men, that is, all men who receive grace are righteous: And they who receive grace are righteous under a threefold notion. First, they are righteous by an imputed righteousness, or by the righteousness of another accounted to them; and thus every godly man is righteous, because freely justified. Secondly, they that have grace are righteous by an Inherent Righteousness, by a stock or a principle of Righteousness planted in them at their Conversion. In conversion, not only the acts, but the state and nature of a man is changed. He who before was nothing but a bundle of unrighteousness, becomes a righteous man; that is, he hath a righteous principle planted in him and abiding with him. Thus a godly man is righteous, because he is sanctified. Thirdly, every man that hath grace, is a Righteous man by a righteousness flowing out from him, or by a practical righteousness; he is righteous by the doing of Righteousness; The former is Righteousness by Conversion, this is Righteousness by Conversation; and this flows from the former, as the Apostle *John* speaks in his first Epistle (*Chap.* 3. 5.) *He that doth righteousness, is righteous*; that is, he is in a righteous state through Justification, and hath righteousness planted in him through Sanctification; And he that is thus righteous in his state, is also a practiser of Righteousness in his way. As it is said of that worthy paire *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, (Luke 1. 6.) *They were both Righteous, walking in all the Ordinances and Commandements of God blameless.* Here was practical Righteousness, they were righteous workers, their course was a course of Righteousness, as themselves were in a state of Righteousness. And thus, I conceive, *Elihu* is chiefly to be understood here; because righteousness in this place is opposed to unrighteous actions. *If thou wert Righteous*; that is, if thy wayes or thy courses were as righteous, as thou hast often reported and asserted them to be (for *Job* in the 27th *Chap.* said, *He would not let go his Righteousness, he would hold it till he dyed*; he would never give up his Integrity, how much soever his friends accused him; he would no more give it up, than give it off, Now saith *Elihu*, *If thou art righteous*, as thou sayest, and standest so much upon it, let it be granted, seeing thou wilt needs have it so, *that thou art righteous*, The Septuagint render so, *Seeing thou art Righte-*

Righteous, or *for as much as thou art Righteous*, that is, according to thy own affirmation, yea though God hath said so of thee, and born that witness of thee) yet what is that to God?

What givest thou unto him?

Justitia tua nihil deum juvat, ne igitur tuam vendites justitiam. Chrysost:

If thy conversation were such as no blame could be laid upon it; though no spot could be seen upon thy garments, after all thy walkings thorough the affaires of this world, yet *what givest thou unto him?* Surely nothing at all. Some conceive this was a famous proverbial Speech amongst the godly in those times, full of Reverence and high Estimation, or rather Admiration of God; *If we are Righteous, what is it to God? or what give we to God? (What givest thou him?)* The meaning is, thou givest him nothing. *A gift is the bestowing of some good thing where there is no obligation*; that's a gift which a man is not bound to bestow by any Law of Righteousnes; A gift is bestowed out of meer liberality, or from a free and bountiful spirit. Now, saith he, *What givest thou unto God?* What service is there in all thy righteous wayes and works, which thou art not obliged to tender unto God, or which thou art not bound to do? Thy Righteousnes doth not at all oblige God, for whatsoever good thou doest, thou art under a command to do it; there is a Law commanding, yea, compelling thee, if thou shouldest refuse; doest thou performe any duty to God or man, which thou art not bound or ingaged to perform? Surely thou doest not, yea thou can'st not. Therefore, what givest thou unto God?

Donum est rei licitæ nullo jure cogente mera liberalitate facta collatio. Hostien.

Or what receiveth he at thy hand?

The words are plain, giving and receiving are Correlatives; where there is giving, there is usually receiving; and where there is receiving, there must be giving. Sometimes there is giving, where there is no receiving. When *Belteshazar* promised *Daniel* great things, if he could Interpret the hand-writing on the wall, (*Chap.* 5. 17.) He answered, *Let thy gifts be to thy self, and thy rewards unto another. Daniel* would not receive his offer: There was giving inpro mise on *Belteshazars* side, but no receiving on *Daniels* side. Most are so much for receiving, that they love the word *give*, as the Prophet taxed and reproved the Rulers of *Israel*, (*Hos.* 4. 18.) *Her Rulers with shame* (that is, shamelesly, or of which they should be ashamed, or for which all cry shame on them!)

them) *do love, Give ye*; that word sounded well, even like sweet musick in their ears: And if others did not offer bribes to corrupt Justice, they invited them, *give ye*, we are ready to receive. The Apostle puts both these together in a good way, (*Phil.* 4. 15.) *No Church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only*: And he would have the Church at *Ephesus* to remember those words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, *It is more blessed to give, than to receive*, (Acts 20. 35.) *Artaxerxes*, one of the Persian Monarchs, was Sirnamed, *Long-hand*; his right hand, or giving hand, being longer than the left; shewing, as some conjecture, that the Honour of Great Kings is seen more in giving than in receiving. But as we have nothing of our own to give unto God, so he hath no need to receive any thing of us. Thus *Elihu* here, *What givest thou him? or what receiveth he at thine hand?*

Artaxerxes *longimanus dextram majorem habebat longiorem; Regis dignius est dare quam accipere.*

Of thine hand.

He expresseth it not barely, *What receiveth he of thee*, but *of thine hand*; because as the hand is the great Instrument of working, so also of giving; we give and bestow with the hand, (what hath he received *of thy hand*), there is a speciallitie in that. Consider thy hand, what can the hand of God take out of thy hand? Thy hand is, First, *a weak hand*; Secondly, *a narrow scanty hand*; Thirdly, thy hand is an *ineffectual hand* to thy self, it cannot bring any work about to the issue, to the full end and accomplishment; therefore what is thy hand, thy weak, thy narrow, thy ineffectual hand, that God should receive any thing out of thy hand? And then consider what the hand of God is; His is, First, a strong hand; Secondly, a large, a wide hand; Thirdly, a hand full already; and, Fourthly, as his hand is full already, so it is a hand filling all things; *He openeth his hand, and fills all things with good.* Now God having such a hand, how canst thou fill his hand with thy hand? *What receiveth he at thine hand?* I need not labour further in the explication of the words; Take one general Observation from them, which I shall draw down into some particulars.

The Righteousnes or Righteous Actions of men, contribute nothing to God;

They are no advantage to God: The best things that we can do,

cannot at all better God, or God is never the better for them: That is the meaning of *David*, (Psal. 16. 3.) speaking as a type of Christ; *My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the Saints which are on the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.* *Jerome* was of opinion, that these words of the Psalme were taken out of this place of *Job.* (*My goodness*) that is, my good deeds *extend* not to thee; the good deeds of Christ did not add any thing to God, they did not give any thing to God; for it is impossible that any good, or any goodness should so be made an addition to him, who is all, and hath all: but (saith he) *to the Saints*, to them my goodness extendeth, I can and will do good to them. Thus St *Paul* spake to the *Athenians*, (Acts 17. 25.) *God is not worshipped with mens hands, as though he needed any thing*: God calls for worship, but he is not worshipped, because he needs our worship, or because he would receive some benefit at the hand of worshippers. The same Apostle puts the question, (*Rom.* 11. 35.) *Who hath given unto him, and it shall be recompenced unto him again?* As much as to say, no man hath given any thing to God, he is above and beyond all the gifts and givings of the creature.

There is a three-fold ground of it, why nothing can be given to God, either to oblige him, or to add any thing to him.

First, All is due to him, what-ever we do is a debt to him; we cannot make the payment of a debt a gift. Be as holy and as righteous as you will, as exact in your walkings as you can, it is all of debt, and therefore not a gift. (*Luke* 17. 10.) *When you have done all*, (when you have run your whole Course of obedience, both as to first and second Table duties,) *say you are unprofitable servants, we have done no more than was our duty to do.* There is no gift, where all is due.

Secondly, What-ever we do in a way of Righteousness, is not a gift, nor an advantage to God; for it was all first given us by God, we and all that we have came first from him; whatsoever we have, we have had it of God. It is said in that place before noted (*Acts* 17. 25.) *He is not worshipped of ment hands, as if he needed any thing*, (why?) *for he giveth to all men life and breath, and all things*; he gives all things, and therefore he needs nothing, nor can any thing properly be said to be given to him, who giveth all things. We have that remarkable Scripture (1 *Chron.* 29. 10.) where

Nihil accessit ei nostra justitia, quæ tota gratuitum est illius donum.

Scitum est illud sapientis Hebræi: de illi

where *David* praiseth the Lord for the offering and gift which he himself and his people had brought towards the building of the Temple; And he desired that his offerings might be accepted of the Lord, not so much as they were given by his hand, as because they and the heart to give them, were received from the hand of God. *Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the Congregation, and said, Blessed be thou Lord God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever, for all that is in Heaven and in Earth is thine; thine is the Kingdome, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. And, now therefore, O God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious Name; But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort; for all things come of thee, and of thy own have we given thee.* And again at the 16th verse; *All this store cometh of thee, and all is thine own.* We cannot be said properly to give another that which is his own already; whatever God receives of us, came from himself: And as whatsoever we give comes from God, so every action or duty which we performe to God, comes from God; he bestows the power to do upon us, before we can do any thing, and therefore it cannot be any addition unto him. There are two graces, which we exercise, very pleasing to God; first, Faith; secondly, Charity; yet neither of these contribute any thing to God. Faith is so far from giving God any thing, that its whole work lyeth in receiving; And though charity be a giving grace, yet it gives to man only, not to God. So then, what doth God receive of man? surely nothing but his own. *David* enquires (*Psal.* 116. 12.) *What shall I return to the Lord for all his benefits?* Mark that word, *return*; the Hebrew Text may be thus rendred; *What shall I make to return to the Lord of all his rendrings, or contributions unto me*; As if he had said, Lord I have received abundance from thee, thou hast payd or recompenced me fully for all my paines, and I am looking over it all, and considering what of it I shall return to thee; it is all thine own, and now Lord what shall I return of it back again to thee? What he received was returned, if not in kind, yet in effect, and the return of that was but his duty, it could not be his desert. Christ indeed merited and satisfied, because he give of his own, and as God-man wrought all righteousness for us in his own strength.

de suo, quia tu & omnia tua illius sunt. Tua ex tua offerimus tibi domine. Drus. *Etiamsi quod debemus reddere deo cupiamus, tamen de suo reddimus.* Salvianus Eccl. Catholi.

Thirdly, The Lord receives nothing at our hands, for *he is full already.* We can put no more into a full vessel; if there be any

empty space, you may put somewhat more into a Vessel, but when it is as full as it can hold, what can you put into it? Who can make the Ocean fuller, which hath in it the fullness of all waters? All that we can give to God is not to much an encrease to him, as a drop of the Bucket is to the whole Ocean. Who can make the Sun b ighter? all we do to, or for God, is not so much as a Candle to the Sun. What can he receive, who hath all things in himself? God is infinitely full, therefore there is no giving to him, nor receiving by him at our hands. That word which is one of the Titles of God holds forth as much, he is *Elshaddi*, that is, *A God every way full, every way sufficient, he is all-sufficient for us, and he is Self-sufficient*. Some of the Heathens had such notions and glimmering apprehensions of God. *Plato* saith, *The exercise of Godlinesse, or of Worship, is acceptable to God, but is not at all profitable to God. It is manifest*, saith *Aristotle*, *that God needs no friends, nor any thing to help him.* The Sacrifices of the *Jews* were great and royal Offerings, they brought their Sheep, and Oxen, and Bullocks, and Goats in abundance, yet the Lord would have them know he had no need of them, (*Psal.* 50. 8.) *I will not reprove thee for thy Sacrifices, and burnt offerings to have been continually before me; I will take no Bullock out of thy house, nor he-Goat out of thy Folds, for every Beast of the Forrest is mine, and the Cattel upon a thousand Hills: I know all the Fowls of the Mountains, and the wild Beasts of the Field are mine. If I were an hungry, I would not tell thee, for the world is mine, and the fulnesse thereof.* Some conceive that *Elihu* aimes especially at those gifts. If thou bringest or givest many sacrifices, what receiveth he at thy hand? The Lord doth not call for sacrifices *because he is hungry*; that is, hath need of them. The Lord (*Zeph.* 2. 11.) threatens the gods of the Heathen, that he would starve or famish them; that is, he would destroy the means of their Worship: But who can famish the Lord, whose the world is, and the fulness of it?

Est quidem pietas illa gratus, non autem utilis. Plato in Euthyphra.
Manifestum est quod nullâ re Deus, nec amicâ egebat. Arist. lib. 7. Eth. c. 12.

Now if God receives nothing at our hands by way of supply, or addition, then

First, *No Creature is necessary unto God.* We all depend on him, he is altogether necessary to us, but we are not necessary to him; we are and ought to be his Servants, but he doth not need our service; we need such a Master, such a Lord, we need to have

have such a one over us, but he needs not such as we are under him. Earthly Masters and Servants have need of one another; Masters keep and maintain their Servants, and Servants are very helpful and profitable to their Masters. As a Servant needs a Master to give him meat and drink, apparel, and the conveniences of this life; so the Master needs the Servant, he needs his work, his labour, his hand, he cannot tell how to do his business without him; Masters cannot live comfortably without their Servants, much lesse honourably, they cannot keep their State and Degree amongst men without Servants; and Servants need their Masters, they cannot subsist, they cannot live, but by wages, or the reward of their labour. God hath made such a tye, knit such a knot among the Creatures, that one, though a Superiour, should not despise the other, though much his Inferiour, for both concurre as parts, to the constitution of the whole, or general constitution of the world. But God is not a part, but the Principle, or Constituter of the Universe, not at all depending upon any part of it. If a Servant should have need of his Master, and not the Master of the Servant, the Master would despise his Servant; but God hath so ordered it, that as the Servant needs the Master, so the Master needs the Servant, while himself hath no need of either. God hath no need of our service, but we need his service, or him as our Lord and Master. *It is an honour to God that he hath so many to serve him, but it is his greatest honour that he needs none to serve him.* Before there were either men or Angels, God had the same honour and happinesse that now he hath, he is self-sufficient; *It were a shame and a dishonour to us, should we own him for God, who needed our good*; he cannot be our God, who needs our good. All Creatures need the help and good of one another, and the help or good of all Creatures comes from God; but God himself is strong enough to help himself, and good enough to make himself everlastingly happy. There is nothing without him, but he can be happy without it; there's no Creature, whether thing or person, in Heaven or Earth, necessary to God, either as to his Being, or well-Being: And therefore we may say, not only to the best man on Earth, but to the most glorious Angel in Heaven, (as *Elihu* to *Job*) *What receiveth he of thine hand?*

Secondly, If what we do, adds nothing to God, if he receive nothing by our most righteous services: then surely God shews

wonderful

wonderful goodnesse towards us, in that he is pleased to make so great an account of, and set such store by our services and righteousnesse, even of any, the least good we do in uprightnesse. Is it not a singular comfort that the Lord puts so much worth upon what we do, though what we do be of no worth to him? and that God should bind himself to us, when he is not at all beholding to us? The Lord doth not say, *What do you give me?* or, *What do I receive at your hands?* thereby to put a slight upon our performances and services; 'tis far from the Lord, that because he hath no need of us, therefore to contemn us; no, he declares a great acceptance of any, the least faithfull service to himself, or to our brethren, which we do at his command. Though, should we stretch our endeavours, and strain our wits to the utmost, to do him good we cannot, yet he doth not undervalue what we do, but takes what is well done, well at our hands, and puts all our good deeds into his Book of Remembrance, and we shall one way or other hear of them again to our comfort. Hence,

Thirdly, We may inferre, *How good is God, who highly rewards us for the good we do, though it do him no good!* Man will scarce thank a man for any good that he doth, unlesse it redound somewhat to himself, much lesse will he pay or reward another for that service which stands him in little, or no stead. If man make a bargain with a man, he comes hardly off with him, if he gets no benefit by it: seeing then the Lord rewards us for those services by which he gets no good at all, how wonderfully doth this declare his goodnesse!

Fourthly, How doth the goodnesse of God appear; seeing though we can adde nothing to his glory, yet if we do good and righteous things, he tells us that we glorifie him, which is the highest commendation imaginable of what we do. 'Tis the Command of Christ (*Mat.* 5. 16.) *Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorifie your Father which is in Heaven.* The Apostles Caution is, *Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. Now though (according to this and the other charge) we, in all we do, sincerely aime at the holding forth and manifesting of that glory and goodnesse that is in God, yet he receives no encrease of glory; is it not therefore wonderful goodnesse, that he is pleased to say, we glorifie him? (which is the highest attainment of the Creature, and the noblest improve-

improvement of our pains and labours. These and many other inferences, may be made for our instruction, from this humbling question, *If thou be righteous, what giv'st thou to him, or what receiveth he at thy hands?*

Elihu having told *Job* that neither his sin did hurt God, nor his righteousnesse advantage him, lest any should thence inferre, surely then it is no great matter whether we be righteous or wicked, whether we do good or evil; to prevent this mischief, he shews that though your sin cannot hurt God, yet it will do hurt enough, and though our righteousnesse adde no good to God, yet it may do much good. This he doth in the next verse.

Vers. 8. *Thy wickednesse may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousnesse may profit the son of man.*

As if he had said, *I will tell thee what will become of the good and evil thou dost, as to advantage or disadvantage; forasmuch as thou canst not advantage God by thy righteousnesse, nor hurt him by thy wickednesse, it must needs follow, that the one may be helpfull, and the other hurtfull to thy self, and to such as thou thy self art: If it were otherwise, or not so, there would be no difference between the doing of good or evil, as to the Event, how greatly soever they differ in their Nature.* *Si bona ageris, nostro bono; si mala, nostro malo.*

Thy wickednesse may hurt a man as thou art, only it cannot hurt God. God is as great and as happy as ever he was, and he will ever be as great and as happy as now he is, let men do their worst, and be as wicked as they can.

Thy wickednesse, &c.

The word *wickednesse* notes sin in the highest degree, at least of a high degree; every wickednesse is sin, but every sin is not wickednesse; yet we are not to understand *Elihu's* meaning, as if great sins only did mischief and hurt. The truth is, every sin doth hurt and mischief; as a little poyson, and the least poyson may do hurt, unlesse it be corrected. We use to say of some things, *A little doth not hurt*; but we cannot say a little poyson doth no hurt, *unlesse you do not take it*, or unlesse it be corrected; a little poyson uncorrected will do hurt. So then, when *Elihu* saith here, *Thy wickednesse may hurt*, we are not to understand it only of great sins, as whoredome, murder, perjury, drunkennesse, and witchcraft, *Modicum non nocet.*

witchcraft, *&c.* but even of idle thoughts, of vain words, or undue paſſions; theſe hurt as well as greater ſins, commonly called *wickedneſſe*. *Thy wickedneſs*

May hurt a man as thou art.

Theſe words (*may hurt*) are not expreſſed in the Original Text, but they are plainly intended and implyed: Yet if we ſhould leave them out of the reading, the ſence would be the ſame (*Thy wickedneſs is to hurt a man as thou art*) That is, thy wickedneſſe is to the hurt or damage of a man as thou art; it may hurt thee or thy brother, it may hurt thy ſelf, or any like thy ſelf.

Hence Note,

First, *That ſin is a hurtfull thing.*

Whereſoever ſin is, it doth miſchief. Sin is ſo bad in the nature of it, that we have reaſon enough to avoid it and flye from it, and ſin is ſo dangerous in the Effects of it, that we have further, though not more reaſon to avoid it, and flye from it; indeed we ſhouldrather (and that is our ſpiritualneſſe in avoiding of ſin) avoid it becauſe of the evil that is in the Nature of it, becauſe it riſeth up againſt the Will, and breaks the holy Commands of God; we have greateſt reaſon to depart from ſin, becauſe it is a departure from God, becauſe of the blackneſſe and filthineſſe of it; yet not onely the blackneſſe of this Coal, but the fire, the eternal fire that is in it, gives us cauſe enough to depart from it. 'Tis true, a truly gracious heart would not ſin, though he might eſcape all the ſad effects of ſin, but when he hears it is as hot as fire, and as deadly as poyſon, and as killing as the plague; when he hears that it is the ruine of Perſons, and of Families, of Churches and Nations, when he hears that 'tis ſin which hath done all the hurt and miſchief that ever was in the world, he ſees he hath further reaſon to dread it, and depart from it.

Again (*Thy wickedneſs may hurt a man.*)

Note;

Sin doth miſchief to man, and to man eſpecially.

Sin doth miſchief all the world over; the whole Creation groans under the miſchief and vanity, which ſin hath brought upon it, (*Rom.* 8. 22.) Sin hath done damage to the whole Creation; but the great

great damage which ſin doth, is to man, to him that acts it to others before whom it is acted, or towards whom it is acted. Sin is diſtributed into two ſorts, as to its hurtfulneſſe. Sin either reſpects our ſelves in the hurt it doth, or others, and thoſe others are either God or our Neighbour; ſin hurts our ſelves moſt, yet ſin as it is a wrong to God, may be ſaid to hurt his honour, and diminiſh the manifeſtation of his glory in the world, (as hath been ſhewed before). And ſin is really a wrong to our Neighbour. There are a number of ſins committed againſt our ſelves, yea, every ſin, though committed againſt our Neighbour, hits and hurts our ſelves; no man can hurt his Neighbour, but he hurts himſelf moſt. So that, although there are many ſins which reſpect others, yet all are againſt our ſelves. Some ſins (unbelief eſpecially, and the neglect of holy duties) hurt our ſelves only; there are ſins which more properly hurt others, as oppreſſion and uncharitableneſſe; there are ſeveral ſins which at once hurt others and our ſelves. Adultery hurts ſelf and others too; evil words hurt our ſelves and others too, as the Apoſtle tells us out of a Poet, (1 *Cor.* 15. 33.) *Evil communication corrupteth good manners*; that is, you corrupt the good manners of others, you debauch others by unſavoury ſpeeches; our ill example hurts our ſelves and others. Our Neighbour is hurt by our ſin. First, By any thing that is a wrong to him, as to his Eſtate, or as to his Perſon, or as to his Credit: Secondly, By the ſcandal of it, when we do that which is evil, it hardens the wicked, and makes them go on more ſecurely in their ſin, and keeps them off from the wayes of God; it endangers good men alſo, and diſcourageth them in the duties they owe both to God and man in the profeſſion of the Goſpel. Thus ſin may hurt our ſelves and our Neighbours.

Thy wickedneſs may hurt a man as thou art.

But why ſaith he *a man as thou art*? What, a man juſt of thy Complexion, or juſt of thy height, ſtature, and pitch? what, a man of thy State and Degree, a man juſt of thy eminency in the world? certainly no; but when he ſaith, *A man as thou art*, his meaning is, *any man*, becauſe all men are in many things alike, they are all mortal, and ſinful, and weak, and apt to receive hurt by the ſins of others. Thus every man is *a man as thou art*.

Hence note

All men are alike.

Though the faces of men are very different, and we know one man from another, because they are unlike in face, yet as to their constitution and natural condition, they are alike; he that is greatest, is such a man as the least; and the strongest is such a man as the weakest, the richest as the poorest, the learnedest as the most ignorant, and the godliest man is as the wickedest man, as to his natural composition. All men are alike in these foure things: First, all men need that which is good. Secondly, all men are sensible of that which is hurtful and afflictive to them. Thirdly, all men are apt to take hurt, and to run into danger by the sin and ill Examples of others, or to receive good by their good deeds, and profitable examples, all men being associated in the same common nature, and familiar each to other. Fourthly, all men are alike in this, that they are not self-sufficient, but stand in need of the help of one another; He that is helpful to a man like himself, helpeth himself, and doth acknowledge that (considering humane frailty) he may have occasion to call for and desire the help of another; and therefore (say some) man hath two hands, two armes, that he may understand himself born as much to need and receive help, as to give it. Thus every man is a man as thou art; and upon these and many other Considerations thou mayest hurt a man as thou art. There is an excellent paradox, handled by some of the Ancients; *No man is hurt, but by himself*; for unless a mans soul be hurt, he is not hurt; which is much confirmed by, and appeareth clearly in the example of *Job*. For the devil planted all those engines, and made all those assaults upon and against him, not because he had a design to make him poor, childless, and diseased, (all which, he knew, could not hurt him) but to make him impatient, and to extort one evil and blasphemous word against God from him. But though it be true, that no man is hurt but by himself, yet it is true also, that the sin of one man may hurt another. Oppression hurts other men, (as to civils) whether they will or no; but no sin can hurt another (as to morals) unless he will; no man is infected by vice, if himself refuse, and be against it; yea the oppressions and afflictions which other men thrust violently upon us, cannot hurt us, unless we by our impatience under them bring hurt

Nemo potest ab alio lædi nisi a seipso, nisi enim quis lædatur animo, non læditur.

hurt to our selves. The cruel usage of Tyrants, did not hurt the Martyrs; when they burnt them, and imprisoned them, and hanged them, they did not hurt them, because they were patient under those oppressions, and took their sufferings for Christs sake with joyfulness. What hurt did the poverty and ulcers of *Lazarus* do him? What hurt had *Abel* by that inhumane cruelty of his brother *Cain*? What hurt had *Paul* by all his sufferings? What any of the Saints, by imprisonment, or banishment, by being sawne asunder, or slain with the sword? properly no hurt at all. It is out of the power and reach of wicked persecutors to hurt the Witnesses of Christ, though they have power to slay them. *Steven* was not hurt when he was stoned, because he freely gave up himself. In a word, take it thus; First, no man is hurt by the sin of another, but as himself is pleased with, or practiseth the same sin; Secondly, no man is hurt by the temptations of the devil, but as he consents and yeilds to them; Thirdly, no man is hurt by the oppositions and persecutions of others, but as he is impatient under them. *Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art,*

And thy Righteousness may profit the son of man.

That is, thy righteous actions or deeds, may profit the *son of man*; that is, thy self, or any man, good or bad. Those words, *may profit*, are not expressed, but are clearly implyed in the sense of the Text. Righteousness tends to every mans benefit, it may help and profit thy self, it may be helpfull or profitable to those who are about thee, or with whom thou hast to do.

Hence note.

First, *Righteousness, or righteous actions, have profit in them.*

Wickedness turns to mans hurt of it self, but Righteousness doth profit. Although there be a vast and wide difference between mans righteousness and unrighteousness; this latter of it self deserving all manner of evil; and the former, because imperfect at the best, deserving no good at all; yet through the bounty and benignity of God it comes to pass, that the smallest (if sincere) endeavour after righteousness shall profit a man as much as his greatest unrighteousness can hurt or damage him. For God who doth not reward us according to our iniquities, (*Psal.* 103. 10.) will most amply reward us according to our righteousness. The

Apoſtle gave command, *Exerciſe thy ſelf unto godlineſs*, (follow that trade well; why? *) for godlineſs is profitable unto all things*, (1 *Tim.* 4. 8.) it profits by vertue of the promiſe, and it hath *the promiſe of this life as well as of that which is to come.* (*Titus* 3. 8.) *This is a faithfull ſaying, and this I will that thou conſtantly affirme, that they which have believed in God, might be carefull to maintain good works*, (why? for) *theſe things are good and profitable unto men.* Some expound theſe words, *good and profitable unto men*, chiefly of doctrine; To teach men to follow works, that indeed is good and profitable doctrine; now if it be a good and profitable doctrine to preſs men to good works, to works of Righteouſneſs, then Righteouſneſs it ſelf, and good works, muſt needs be profitable. There is ſuch an excellency in the nature of Righteouſneſs, it is ſuch an honourable, amiable, and beautifull thing in its own nature, that it is enough to draw us to the doing of it (as ſome have ſaid of Vertue in general, *If vertue could be ſeen, it would draw all to the admiration of it*; ſo I ſay of Righteouſneſs in ſpecial, *If it could be ſeen, it would draw all eyes and hearts after it*) But beſides that, here is an excellent Loadſtone, here is profit, thy Righteouſneſs may profit another; profit draws much, it draws on all men in the world; where there is any profit and benefit to be had, how do men ſtrive to trade there, as if Heaven were to be had there? now Righteouſneſs is profitable; the exerciſe of Righteouſneſs is no poor trade, there is a great deale of advantage in it; and I might ſhew you how every work, good for the matter, done in a right manner, and for right ends, is profitable to others, and to our ſelves. To ſpeak a good word, may be a means to miniſter grace unto the hearers; and to do a good work, of any ſort, miniſters a gracious example to the beholders: by doing good, you may draw others to do good; to ſee one walking in wayes of righteouſneſs, invites and allures others into wayes of righteouſneſs; as bad examples corrupt, ſo good examples inſtruct; as bad examples build up for hell, ſo good examples build up for heaven; To be built or helpt on heaven-ward, is the beſt profit in the world, greater profit than the gain of the whole world. And as every good work miniſters a good example to the beholders, ſo works of Charity miniſter comfort and relief to the receivers, as alſo an occaſion of bleſſing God for their benefactors; yea works of Charity to others are profitable alſo to

to our ſelves, for there is a promiſe of reward to thoſe who miniſter the leaſt charities to ſuch as deſerve the greateſt charity, though uſually they find the leaſt, (*Math.* 10. 42.) *Whoſoever ſhall give to drink unto one of theſe little ones, a cup of cold water only* (and how cold is their charity who will not give that!) *in the name of a diſciple, ſhall in no wiſe loſe his reward*; that is, he ſhall ſurely have it. Thus we ſee how profit and advantage, even great profit and advantage comes by Righteouſneſs; yet take heed of thinking that your Righteouſneſs deſerves any the leaſt profit at the hand of God. Though we preſs you to Righteouſneſs as profitable, yet it becomes you to ſay, *we are unprofitable ſervants*, and therefore cannot challenge any profit as our due, how righteous ſoever we are. It doth not at all follow, becauſe we affirme Righteouſneſs will profit us, that therefore Righteouſneſs can juſtifie us, or that, becauſe it is profitable to us, therefore it can ſave us. *All our righteouſneſſes are but as a filthy garment*, ſaith the Prophet, and therefore unprofitable for this thing. The Apoſtle *counted all things loſs* (not gain) *dung* (not profit) *that he might win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having his own Righteouſneſs*, (Phil. 3. 8, 9.) Righteouſneſs is profitable, if you keep it in its proper place, and apply it to its proper uſe; it is profitable to what God hath appointed it; he helps us to work Righteouſneſs, and then rewards us for our righteous working: *God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labour of love*, (*Heb.* 6. 10.) Let us be found in our duty, and then in due time and place we ſhall find our profit. Our experience will teach us at laſt, that while we have been doing good to others, we have done good to our ſelves; *Righteouſneſs is profitable unto all things*, and to all men, as well to thoſe who do it, as to thoſe for whom it is done.

JOB,

JOB, Chap. 35. Vers. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

9. *By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason of the arme of the mighty.*

10. *But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth Songs in the night?*

11. *Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowles of heaven.*

12. *There they cry (but none giveth answer) because of the pride of evill men.*

13. *Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.*

I Have dispatched the first of those great Objections which *Elihu* made afresh against *Job* in this Chapter, his speaking unduly of God. This context contains a second, with the answer to it.

The Connection is given by some thus; Whereas *Elihu* told *Job* at the 8th verse, That *his wickedness might hurt a man like himself*; He here proves, that the wickedness of man is very hurtfull to men, so hurtfull, *that by reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry: They cry out by reason of the arme of the mighty.* Yet I shall not prosecute the words in that dependance, but as they are matter of a second complaint or charge brought by *Elihu* against *Job*. The charge is laid down in the 9th verse, and his answer is prosecuted in the 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th verses.

Vers. 9. *By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry.*

This offended *Job*; the poor cryed, and they had no helper, no deliverer. We may conceive, that *Elihu* gathered up this complaint from the words of *Job*, (*Chap.* 24. 12.) *Men groan from out of the City, and the soul of the wounded cryeth out, yet God layeth not folly to them*: As if he had said, The Lord lightly passeth by,

by, and takes little notice of the greatest afflictions, the oppressions of the poor, though righteous men.

Elihu grants these general truths; First, that many are oppressed; Secondly, that many cry out in their oppressions; Thirdly, that many remain undeliveeed from, and unreliered in their oppressions. God sometimes seemeth not to regard the groans and cryes of the afflicted, nor doth he alwayes presently take vengeance of oppressors according to their folly. *Elihu* grants all this, he grants that many poor men are so mightily oppressed by the mighty, that they are forced to cry mightily; yet he strongly acquits God from any such imputation, as those words of *Job* seem to admit or insinuate. And in the prosecution of his answer (as will appear in opening the 10th and 11th verses) he sheweth, that the reason why the oppressed are not delivered, or answered when they cry, is in themselves, and not in God, (and he would have *Job* consider, whether he were not of that number) *they cry* (saith *Elihu*) but they do not cry with such a frame of heart, with such a disposition of spirit, as they ought; they cry as men pressed rather with the weight of their own sufferings, than touch with any sense of their sins, or reverence of the soveraignty of God, giving them up to the power of oppressors; or as having any faith in him for their deliverance, or quiet submission to him, who is ready to help all those who religiously fly to him for refuge, and is able to bring them out of their darkest and most deplorable condition. These may be said either not to pray at all, or they pray not with such holy aims and designs, with such integrity and uprightness of heart, as becometh the people of God: They pray under the power of impatience, or moved with envy at the power of their adversaries, or with a desire of utmost revenge, which nothing stops them from, but their own want of power, or because they cannot; and therefore God takes no notice of their prayers, (*v.* 12, 13.) *There they cry, but none giveth answer; Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.* That's the summe and scope of the Context. I shall now open the words in order.

Vers. 9. *By reason of the multitude of oppressions, they make the oppressed to cry.*

Here are oppressions, and a multitude of oppressions. The word רבים signifieth

signifieth *magnitude* as well as *multitude*, the *muchnes's* as well as the *manyness* (if I may so speak) of the oppressions which were upon them. Any one great oppression will make men cry, how much more many great ones? We render it as a word of number. *By reason of the multitude*

Of oppressions.

עשק *Oppressit, vim fecit, quavis injuria affecit.*

The Original notes *oppression* of all sorts: First, oppression upon the credit and good name of another, by slander and false accusation; So the Septuagint render it, *By reason of calumnies*, or *unrighteous charges*, or *Sycophantismes*, (that's the word in the Greek Translation) *they cry*. False accusers undermine others, and bring them into danger by burdening them with lyes. Secondly, it notes usually oppression upon a mans estate, (1 *Sam.* 12. 4. *Isa.* 33. 15. *Ezek.* 18. 7. *Mal.* 3. 5.) Thirdly, upon his person, (*Isa.* 52. 4.) Now when a man is oppressed all over, when his credit or good name is oppressed by calumniation, his estate by wrongfull seisure, and his person by violent restraint, here's a troop, a multitude of oppressions. *By reason of the multitude of oppressions*

They make the oppressed to cry.

That is, the oppressed do not only complain a little, but are forced to open lamentations; the load upon them is so heavy, that they cannot contain, *they cry*; yea as the next clause hath it, *they cry out*, as a woman in travel, when her paines come upon her.

They make the oppressed to cry.

They make them cry upon a double Consideration; First, because of the misery which they feel, and are burdened with; Secondly, for the mercy which they desire, expect, and think long a-coming; men cry for ease, for help, for assistance, for deliverance: we may suppose the oppressed ones in the Text crying in all these respects; the burden was so heavy upon them, that it made them cry out for the very weight of it, and they cryed and called for some charitable, or tender heart, to come and ease them of it, and deliver them from it. *Elihu* doth not rest in speaking this once, but repeats it again; *By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry.*

They cry out by reason of the arme of the mighty.

These words poynt us expressly to the cause of their cry, or outcry; it was *the arme of the mighty*; which may be taken either properly, or figuratively. Properly, the Arme is a well known and most usefull member of the body: And because there is a great deal of strength and power in the arme, therefore by a figure, the *arme* signifieth *strength, might*, or *power*; and to say, *they cry out by reason of the arme of the mighty*, is as much as to say, they cry out by reason of the *power* of the *mighty*. The *arme* is frequently in Scripture put for *power*; the powerful wrath of God is called *the arme of God*. The Prophet (*Isa.* 30. 30.) speaks of the *lighting down of his arme*. When the Lord lets his arme fall, or light down upon a man, a family, or a Nation, in wrath, it crusheth either or all of them to pieces. And as the powerful wrath, so the powerful grace of God is called *his arme*, (*Isa.* 53. 1.) *Who hath believed our report? to whom is the arme of the Lord revealed?* That is, his mighty power, working by and manifesting it self in Christ, and in the ministery of the Gospel, for the conviction, conversion, and salvation of sinners. Thus also the arme of man, is the power of man, (*Dan.* 11. 6.) *She shall not retain the power of the arme; neither shall he stand, nor his arme:* That is, his power shall fall, or both he and she (*Bernice* and *Antiochus Theus*) shall fall and be powerless. (*Psal.* 37. 16.) *The arme of the wicked* (that is, their power) *shall be broken, but the Lord upholdeth the righteous. They cry out by reason of the arme*

Severissimum dei supplicium immissione aut desistentione Brachii significatur.

Of the mighty.

רבים The same word which in the first part of the verse is translated *multitude*, is here translated, *The mighty*. But what was the mightiness of these men? There is a four-fold mightiness. First, there is mightiness of body, that is natural might, and 'tis properly the might of the arme. Secondly, there is a mightiness in valour and in Armes: Thus souldiers and warriers are mighty men; they who having courage in their hearts, have also weapons in their hands, and swords by their sides, are the mighty. Such a one was *Gideon*, to whom the Angel said, (*Judg.* 6. 12.) *The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.* Thirdly, there is a mighI tiness

tineſs of Authority: And thus the Magiſtrate is a mighty man; ſuppoſe he be weak in body, yet he is mighty in power, and can do great things. Fourthly, there is a mightineſs of wealth and riches: Thus *Boaz* is called *a mighty man of wealth*, (Ruth 2. 1.) Riches have ſo much might in them, that in the Hebrew one word ſerves to ſignifie both *might* and *riches*. We may underſtand the mighty man here in any or all theſe four ſenſes. *The oppreſſed cry out by reaſon of the arme of the mighty*. They who have much bodily ſtrength, often oppreſs the weaker, and ſo do the mighty in Armes, and ſo do the mighty in Authority, and ſo the mighty in riches have often done, making the poor and the oppreſſed cry; *They cry out by reaſon of the arme of the mighty*.

From the former part of the verſe; Obſerve.

Oppreſſion is a common ſin.

Not only was *Babylon* ſtained with it, but *Jeruſalem*. That's an amazing paſſage (*Jer. 6. 6.*) *Thus hath the Lord of hoſts ſaid; hew ye down trees, and caſt a Mount againſt Jeruſalem. This is the City to be viſited, ſhe it wholly oppreſſion in the midſt of her.* Not only was *Jeruſalem* a City, but, The City, a City above all Cities, to be viſited by an oppreſſing enemy; and why? even becauſe ſhe not only had oppreſſors in her, but was oppreſſion. O how oppreſſive was that City, which was oppreſſion, and that not only in ſome parts of her, but *wholly*, and that not in her skirts and ſuburbs, but in the midſt of her! The Lord, to ſhew that the *Jewes* were ſuperlatively rebellious, or moſt rebellious againſt him, calleth them (in the abſtract) *rebellion*, as the Margin hath it, (*Ezek. 2. 7.*) and to ſhew how ſuperlatively oppreſſive they were one againſt another, He calls *Jeruſalem oppreſſion*. Here in the Text we have a *multitude of oppreſſions*, ſurely then, there were a multitude of oppreſſors. To heare of a multitude of ſins of all ſorts, is very ſad, but when there is multitude of one ſort, and that one of the worſt ſort, and ſuch a ſin as cannot go alone, but draws after it a heap of almoſt all ſorts of ſin: what a multitude of ſins are there! It cannot be denied, but that oppreſſion is a very common epidemical ſin, if we take and conſider it in the full latitude of it. For there is a two-fold oppreſſion. Firſt, there is a ſecret oppreſſion. To deceive, defraud, or go beyond another, in the Apoſtles ſenſe, is to oppreſs him. And thus 'tis ſaid, (*Hoſ. 12. 7.*) *He is a Merchant, the*

balances of deceit are in his hand, he loveth to oppreſs. He doth not oppreſs by violence, with a ſword in his hand, but by craft with balances in his hand; he oppreſſeth while he over-reacheth in dealing and trading. This ſort of oppreſſion runs up and down every where; and though this kind of oppreſſion make not a great cry, yet it is a great ſin, a crying ſin. There is alſo a ſecret oppreſſion under colour of Law; many turn the very Rules of Juſtice into rods of oppreſſion: And this is by ſo much the worſe, by how much it hath the better cover. Secondly, there is an open oppreſſion, the *Nimrods* of the world, the mighty Hunters tare and vex and trouble all they can, and would make all tremble before them, or run from them, as the Hare and Hart from their cherry, but mercileſs purſuers. Now if both ſecret and open oppreſſions are ſo commonly practiſed, oppreſſion may juſtly beare the title of a common ſin.

Secondly, Note.

Oppreſſion is a very crying ſin.

That cannot but be a crying ſin, which makes ſo many cry. Oppreſſion then is a crying ſin. Firſt, as to the nature of it: Secondly, as to the effect of it. Oppreſſion cryeth, and it makes thoſe cry who are oppreſſed. *Solomon* ſaith, (*Eccleſ. 7. 7.*) *Oppreſſion maketh a wiſe man mad.* That which puts a man even out of his wits, or beſides the right uſe of his reaſon, will put him much to the uſe of his tongue, cauſing him to complain, cry out, and clamour. But who are they that are moſt given to, and deepeſt drencht in this ſin of oppreſſion? The Text anſwers, *They cry out by reaſon of the arme of the mighty.*

Hence note, Thirdly.

Power is commonly abuſed to oppreſſion.

We read indeed of a poor man oppreſſing the poor, (*Pro. 28. 3.*) And *Solomon* tells us, that ſuch a mans oppreſſion is the ſoareſt oppreſſion; for he compares it (in the ſame verſe) *to a ſweeping raine, which leaveth no food.* They who have nothing, will take all when they can come by it, and get it. If all men in power ſhould be as hard to their inferiors, as ſome are who have little or no power, there were no living in the world. Neceſſity may drive the poor to be more oppreſſive, than Ability draws the

rich. 'Tis a sad encounter when the poor contend with the poor; The necessity of the one knows no mercy, and the imbecility of the other, can give him no help. Nothing hardens the heart so much as want or hunger, (*Lam.* 4. 10.) They have little or no sense of anothers misery, who are under the extream smart, and feel the biting of their own. But though poor men oppress soreest, yet they oppress seldomest and fewest. They can oppress none, but such as are poorer or weaker than themselves, and cannot do that often. There must be an over-matching power in all who oppress; and usually, they who oppress, are great and mighty in power. (*Psal.* 52. 1.) *Why boastest thou thy self in mischief, O mighty man?* The man was mighty, and what did this might serve him for? what use did he put it to? even to do mischief. Many have a mind and will enough to do mischief, who want both power and opportunity to do it: But they who have power and opportunity to do mischief, seldome want a mind or will to do it. Power is of great use to do good, and 'tis a great temptation to do bad things. As *Laban* bragg'd to *Jacob*, and crowed over him as his underling (*Gen.* 31. 29.) *It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt*; And what hindred him then, or what hath hindred many in all Ages of the world, from doing that hurt to others, which they had power to do? Not a dislike or abhorrence of the fact (which through grace stops every good man from hurting others, how great soever his power is) but a secret restraint upon their heart, like that, which *Laban* had in a dream, or vision to his eare; *Take heed thou speak not to Jacob good or bad*; that is, meddle not with him in any case to stop his journey. The Prophet (*Ezek.* 22. 6.) describing the sinfulness of those times, saith; *Behold the Princes of Israel, every one were in thee, to their power, to shed blood.* They did it, *to their power*; we put in the Margin, *To their arme*; That is, they used and improved their arme or power to the utmost length and stretch for the oppression of others. The Prophet *Jeremie* chargeth that people with sinning in general at that rate, (*Chap.* 3. 5.) *Behold thou hast spoken and done evill things, as thou couldest.* Some men sin (as all men should love and serve God) with all their might, with all their strength; they do evil with both hands greedily; that they sin no more, is not for want of will, but ability. As the people were thus set upon all manner of sin, so the Princes upon that special sin oppression. They were to their

their power, for shedding blood; yea many desire to get power into their hand, that they may avenge themselves by their own hand, and be ready to hurt whom and where they do not love. 'Tis not so much ambition which provokes some men to affect power and greatness, as malice and a desire of having their ends upon whomsoever stands in their way. These like the great Fishes of the Sea, delight to swallow up and feed upon the lesser; or like the great and strong Beasts of the Forrest, they tare and devoure the Lambs or Sheep of the pasture. They use (that is, indeed abuse) their power, not so much for their own good, as in wronging their neighbours, whose hurt they should never seek, and whose good they ought to seek and promote next their own. Power should be used and put forth, for help, not hurt, for protection, not ruine; and therefore Magistrates, who are the chief mighty men of the earth, who are called *Powers*, (Tit. 3. 1.) are also called *the Sheilds of the earth*; implying, they are to use their power for the defence (a Sheild is for defence) of the oppressed, not to oppress. The Scripture calls Magistrates *Sheilds*, but it never calls the Magistrate a *Sword*. It saith indeed the Magistrate hath a *sword*, and that he *beareth not the sword in vaine*, (*Rom.* 13. 4.) that is, he doth not bear it so as to bear with evil doers, and never draw it, nor use it. But the Scripture doth not say, the Magistrate is a *Sword*, as it saith, he is a *Shield*; hereby intimating, that the Power of the Magistrate should rather be exercised in protecting than in punishing, rather in saving than destroying. What the Apostle saith concerning the designe or purpose of his ministerial office, *We have this power to edification, and not to destruction*, (2 Cor. 13. 10.) is true of all power; the primary designe of it is for protection, rather than for destruction, and not at all for oppression or vexation. Magistrates have Swords, but they are Shields, not Swords; they have a Sword to cut off evil doers, and by that the good are preserved and defended. Such mighty ones, who delight to be Swords, but care not to be Shields, who are all for cutting and destroying, not at all for saving, relieving, and protecting, (such mighty ones, I say) caused the oppressed to cry, yea to cry out in *Jobs* time; and in what times soever they are, they make the oppressed cry out. And the matter, that *Elihu* supposed *Job* was offended at, was, that God did not hear the cry of these oppressed ones, nor appear.

Paratiores ad nocendum.

pear for their deliverance; which yet he hath declared himself ready to, as *David* afterward describeth him, (*Psa.* 12. 5.) *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise* (*saith the Lord*) *I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.* But *Job* hearing this cry of the oppressed, or crying out of his own oppression, and God seeming not to regard it, was stumbled at the matter. To remove this, *Elihu* answers in the next verse.

Vers. 10. *But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night?*

There is a two-fold Exposition of these words, arising from a doubt about the Antecedent to *none*, or who is meant by those that say not, *Where is God my maker?* Who are those?

The first Interpretation gives it to the oppressors, to the mighty men before spoken of; *They make the oppressed to cry by reason of the multitude of oppressions*; but none of *these mighty oppressors say, Where is God my maker, that giveth songs in the night?* Thus the verse is translated quite through, with respect to wicked oppressors, who cast God out of their thoughts, never saying, *Where is God my maker*, who hath set me up, who hath given me this power, and given me songs, (that is, occasions of joy) in the night? The wicked have abundance, they can feast it and sing it day and night, yet mind not God the fountain and bestower of all. This is a truth in it self; and because the interpretation is insisted upon by some as the truth intended in the present Text,

Take this Note from it.

Oppressors put away the thoughts of God, or mind not God, when they do, or are about to do, mischief.

They make the oppressed cry, but they say not, *Where is God?* They neither speak nor think of God, who hath cloathed them with power, and made their arme mighty. We finde this frame frequently ascribed in Scripture to oppressors; *Elihu* chargeth *Job* with it, (*Chap.* 22d) where having told him to his face, of many acts of oppression; *Thou hast stripped the naked of their clothing*, (v. 6.) *Thou hast withholden bread from the hungry*, (v. 7.) *And the armes of the fatherless have been broken*, (v. 9.) Having (I say) reckoned up these his supposed oppressions, he concludes,

cludes, (v. 13.) *And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the dark Cloud?* *David* in prayer, speaks the same of his oppressors, (*Psal.* 86. 14.) *O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul, and have not set thee before them.* (Psal. 94. 5, 6.) *They break in pieces O Lord thy people, and afflict thine heritage; They slay the widow, and the stranger, and murder the fatherless: Yet they say, the Lord doth not see it, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.* All these Scriptures may be resolved into the Text; *They say not, Where is God my maker?* They who do all they can to unmake and undo their fellow-creatures, care not to remember him, who is the maker and creator of us all. But

Secondly, I conceive, those words, *None saith, Where is God my maker?* are rather to be referred to the oppressed, than to the oppressors: The oppressed cry indeed, but not unto God their maker. As *Job* said, (*Job* 24. 12.) *Men groan from out of the City, and the soul of the wounded cryeth out, yet God layeth it not to heart*; so here *Elihu* saith, *men groan and cry*, yet themselves lay not God to heart; *None saith, Where is God my maker?* Thus our translation seems to carry it, and thus 'tis most generally understood; *None of the oppressed say*, &c.

Taking this sense, *Elihu* here begins to assigne the reason why the oppressed are not delivered. As if he had said, 'Tis true, there are a multitude of pressures and oppressions, and they transport all manner of men with passion; the oppressed cry, they make much ado, when they suffer, against them, under whom they suffer: But few or none are so wise, in such a case, as to recollect themselves, and make serious application to God, putting him in mind of his own gracious nature towards the work of his hands, to have mercy upon it, and in faith to seek to him for remedy and comfort, as being only able to relieve and glad the heart in great extremities; they look not to the hand of God, *when they cry out by reason of the arme of the mighty*: they only toyle and teare themselves with complaints, they cry out of this and that man, of this and that instrument; but, alas, they find neither redress nor deliverance, because they say not, *Where is God my maker?* That is, they are more forward to complain of wrong done them by men, than to remember what good, or what favours God hath done them; They do not particularly and specially apply themselves

selves to God in their trouble, they do not seek nor enquire early after God, nor humble themselves before him, or under his mighty hand, neither do they consider what God is to them, nor whether he be with them, and in them; and if they find not God near them, nor in them, they consider not how they may be united to him, or get him near them. We find God, when we heare his voyce speaking to us by his Word and Spirit, and hearken to his voyce; we find God when we are at peace with him, trust upon him confidently, and rejoyce in him comfortably. The oppressed considered not these things.

Non habet cogitationem deliberationem, propositum quærendi deum, neque agnitionem æstimationemq; beneficiorum ejus; sunt ἀσύνετοι. Coc:

None saith.

Here is an universal Negative, *none*; that is, not so much as one; yet we may understand it with an allay, *none*, that is, few or none (as we commonly speak) *say, Where is God my maker?* Possibly many say it with their mouths, but few or none say it; either, first, heartily; or secondly, spiritually; or thirdly, humbly; or fourthly, repentingly; or fifthly, believingly; or sixthly, submittingly; and therefore no wonder, if they are not heard and helped when they cry. It is a common thing for men in distress, or under oppression, to cry out, *O God, O Lord*, The name of God is taken by many in vaine, when any thing afflicts or hurts them; but few call upon his name. It is no easie matter to cry out, in deed, *O God my maker*, or to say with a serious holy and gracious frame of spirit, *Where is God my maker?*

There is a twofold understanding of these words.

Sunt verba optantis.

First, Some look upon them, as an earnest wish or prayer for help; *None saith, Where is God my maker?* That is, none saith, O that God my maker would appear in the present manifestations of his power to succour and deliver me. In which sense *Elisha* is conceived to speak when he smote the waters with *Eliahs* Mantle, (2 *Kings* 2. 14.) *And said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* As if he had said, O thou God of *Elijah* come, shew thy glorious power, and divide these waters.

Sunt verba gratulantis.

Secondly, Others expound them as an expression of praise, or as the words of a man looking up to God in thankfulness for former benefits, in present straights. *Where is God my maker?* Where's he that made me, and hath preserved me hitherto? As if *Elihu* had said, none of these oppressed ones have recourse to God in

in the day of their calamity, confessing and acknowledging his great goodness to them in their creation and further preservation, which might much comfort and encourage their hearts under present grievances and pressures; None saith, *Where is God my maker?*

The word *maker*, may be taken in a threefold notion; First, for him that hath given us our being. As God is the maker of heaven and of earth, so he is our maker, (*Gen.* 1. 26, 27.) Secondly, for him that hath continued us in and preserved our being; for providence is a renewed creation. Thirdly, for him who hath raised us up, or preferred us, and done us good all our dayes. In which sense the word is used (1 *Sam.* 12. 6.) *And Samuel said unto the people, it is the Lord that advanced Moses and Aaron.* We put in the Margin, *made Moses*, &c. it is this word, he made them great, and put them in those high places of Government and Trust. The Lord is he that maketh men in this sense. We say commonly of a man that is advanced to some great place, *He is a made man*; and on the contrary, of a man that is thrown down, *He is an undone man.* God giveth us a being, and a bodily fabrick, he protects us in our being, he advanceth us to a wel-being, in all we may call him, and call upon him as our Maker. And when men would unmake us, that is, oppress and undo us, then we should say in faith, *Where is God our maker?* who once gave us life, and hath since lifted us up from the gates of death, and put us into a good condition. Many are crying out upon, and possibly, some railing and raging at men, but who saith (in the sense opened) *Where is God my maker?*

Eloah nomen singulare עשי *participium plurale. Factores mei; sic usu obtinuit: de deo loquuntur promiscue modo singulariter modo pluralitur. Sensus autem ubiq; singularis est. Ideo nomen* אלהים *Elohim quando de vero deo dicitur interpretes reddunt semper* deus, *ubi ratio habetur sensus, non terminationis.* Drus: *vid:* Merc: *Ubi est deus qui fecerunt me.* Heb: כרא אלהים אלהים קדשים היא

There is one thing further considerable in the Grammar of the Text. The Hebrew is plural, or a plural with a singular; as (*Gen.* 1. 1.) *In the beginning God created:* The word *Elohim*, rendred *God*, is plural; The word *Bara, created*, singular. Thus here, *Where is God my makers?* Mr *Broughton* translates, *Where is the puissant my makers.* I might spend much time in shewing the consent of several Scriptures in that poynt. *Joshua said to the people*, (who promised and engaged to serve the Lord) *ye cannot serve the Lord.* Why could they not? the reason follows; *For he is an Holy God*, (*Josh.* 24. 19.) The Hebrew strictly is, *God holyes he.* Thus the Prophet expresseth it, (*Isa.* 54. 5.) *Thy makers is thy husband.* *Solomons* admonition runs in the same plural stile, (*Eccl.* 12. 1.)

 Remem-

Deus ſanctus eſt. Ad verbum. Dii ſancti ipſe. Mont:

Remember now thy Creators in the dayes of thy youth. But though the Scripture ſpeaks of God ſometimes in the ſingular, ſometimes in the plural number, yet the ſenſe is alwayes ſingular. The true God being but *One*, and the onemoſt one, and therefore the plural word (*Elohim*) is alwayes rendred in the ſingular number *God*, where mention is made of the true God; they having regard to the true meaning or Divinity of the Text, not to the Grammar, or termination of the word. There are uſually two reaſons given by learned tranſlaters and interpreters, why the true God who is but one in eſſence and being, is ſo often expreſſed in the Hebrew text plurally. Firſt, to inſinuate or intimate unto us that Great and glorious myſtery of the Bleſſed Trinity of perſons in the Godhead; I ſay, to intimate it, we cannot make a full or convincing proof from it againſt any Antitrinitarian Adverſary; becauſe though the word *Elohim* notes a plurality, yet we cannot by any force of the word, determine that plurality preciſely to a Trinity, that muſt be done by other Scriptures, of which we have an abundant ſtore to ſtop the mouth of all gainſayers. Secondly, they tell us, This plural word is uſed to ſet forth the honour of God, according to the uſage of Kings and Soveraigne Princes (called Gods) who ſpeak of themſelves (though ſingle perſons) in a plural ſtile, *We* and *Us*. But I conceive, neither is this cogent, though both this and the former may be piouſly improved. So much for the opening of theſe words, *No man ſaith, Where is God my maker?*

Hence obſerve.

First, *Many cry and complain in affliction, but look not to God in affliction.*

(*Deut.* 32. 18.) *Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindfull, and haſt forgotten God that formed thee.* Which as it is often verified in times of peace, plenty, and proſperity, ſo not ſeldome in times of trouble, preſſure, and affliction. Yea, there are ſome who cry and complain in affliction, yet turn away from God in affliction, (*Hoſ.* 7. 14.) *They have not cryed unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds; they aſſemble themſelves for corne and wine, and they rebell againſt me.* Theſe are ſo far from ſeeking God indeed, or ſaying, *Where is our maker*, with their heart, that they rebell againſt him, while they would be relieved and fed by him. How frequently, even at this day, do ſome men ſtorme

ſtorme, and fret, and rage, little minding God in their afflictions, though formally or vocally calling on him. 'Tis eaſie to complain, but hard to pray in a day of trouble. The *Jewes* are reproved for their regardleſneſs of God, while they made great preparations in a time of danger and war, or of a feared ſiege, (*Iſa.* 22. 8, &c.) *Thou didſt look in that day to the armour of the houſe of the forreſt; ye have ſeen alſo the breaches of the City of David, that they are many*, &c. *And the houſes have ye broken down to fortifie the wall: Ye made alſo a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool*, &c. Here were politick warlike preparations, yet God was little thought upon in all this; as it followeth, (*v.* 11.) *But ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had reſpect unto him that faſhioned it long ago.* 'Tis thus with the moſt of men; when outward miſery comes upon them, what crying? what working is there? yet little returning to God, little turning into their own hearts.

Secondly, Note.

When men oppreſs and vex us, it is beſt to have our recourſe to God, and apply to him.

That counſel, *Look to me and be ſaved*, (*Iſa.* 45. 22.) is true of temporal as well as of eternal ſalvation. God is our beſt friend at all times, even in the beſt times, and it is beſt to look to him in the worſt times. *David* could ſay, (*Pſal.* 73. 28.) when fleſh, and ſtrength, and heart, when all fayled him; *It is good for me to draw near to God.* Let our condition be what it will, but eſpecially if we are in a bad condition, it is good, yea beſt to go to him who hath our times, that is, all the changes of our condition in his hand, to him, in whoſe hand the arme of the mighty is, and in whoſe hand alone there is might to help and deliver us from the arme of the mighty. Is it not beſt to look to him in affliction, who can either ſupport us in, or bring us out of our affliction as pleaſeth him? He that made us can protect and ſave us; therefore in every pinching ſtrait, in every preſſing danger, let us go to God in faith and hope, and he will either give us enlargements, or do us good by and in our worſt and greateſt ſtraits.

Thirdly, Note.

As it is good, when at any time we are in trouble to look to God, ſo we ſhould then look to God, ſpecially under this relation, as he is our Maker.

It is good then to say, God is my maker, and I am the work of his hands, therefore he will take care of me, and deliver me out of the hand of my oppressors. There are five duties which arise from this Consideration, that God is our Maker. First, We should highly esteem and be thankfull for this benefit, our making. Secondly, We should be confident that he who hath made us will preserve us. Thirdly, We should patiently submit to him, when he afflicteth us himself, or suffers others to afflict us. Fourthly, We should give him glory, by believing that he will take care of us in, or deliver us out of all our sufferings and afflictions. Fifthly, We should not think nor speak hardly of God, because he hath made us subject to tryals, and the exercise of patience; neither should we take it ill, that he hath made others so high or great, that they have power to oppress us. In all these respects, we should look to God our maker, and neither murmure at, nor be afraid in a day of affliction. The Lord himself poynts us to that, (*Isa.* 51. 12, 13.) *Who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall dye, and of the son of man which shall be made as grasse, and forgettest the Lord thy maker?* It is good in time of affliction to remember God in all our relations, and in this, as our *maker*, in a three-fold making of us. First, As our maker in a natural capacity, that is, as he hath made these bodies of ours; we may plead with and urge the Lord to take care of and preserve our bodyes, because he hath made them; preservation is an act of providence, and providence followeth creation. Secondly, As our maker in a civil capacity, that is, as he hath made us rich or poor, high or low in the world, or in any worldly enjoyments. *Pharaoh* that great Dragon, lying in the midst of the rivers, said, (*Ezek.* 29. 3.) *My river is mine own, and I have made it for my self.* But grace teacheth us to say otherwise; if we are rich or strong, God hath made us so; if our river be broad and deep, full and over-flowing, God hath made it so; and if we are poor, and weak, if our river be narrow and shallow, empty and dry, God hath made it so; and who shall say to him, Why hast thou made it so? That God is the maker of our crosse, should make us quiet under it. Thirdly, A godly man should look to God in affliction, as his maker in a spiritual capacity; I do not mean as he hath made our spirits, but as he hath made us spiritual, or as we are his *workmanship*, (that's the Apostles word) *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, (Eph. 2. 10.) That we are thus wrought, works much upon the heart of God in the day of our affliction. That God hath made us men, that we are his creatures, is a good argument, a faire plea, and moves much; but that he hath made us new men, or new creatures, his Sons by grace, and Temples of his Spirit, that he hath made us holy, believing, righteous, is a far stronger argument, a fuller plea, and moves much more. A soul that can go to God thus, and tell him he is his maker; a soul that can say, (as 'tis said of the Church, *Isa.* 54. 5.) *My maker is my husband*; He that made me, hath married me to himself; a soul that can say this, may indeed triumph in and over all his tribulations. How sweet is it to have an interest in Christ, and by him a relation to God as our maker in this respect. When the Lord rejects a people to the utmost, he saith he will not be stayd, no not by this relation as their maker, from doing it, (*Isa.* 27. 11.) *This is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.* As if the Prophet had said, If any argument could move the Lord to shew mercy, this would do it, to tell him, *he hath made such a people*, or, *he is their maker.* But there are none whom the Lord hath made in the third sense, as to a new creation, but he will have mercy on them, and shew them favour; his making of them such, is a greater mercy and an higher favour, than any they can ask of him; nor are there any of that making, who are of no understanding. So then, he that is made of God spiritually, needs not care for all the unmaking or undoing he can receive from men, nor fear that he shall ever be unmade or unmercy'd by God. All he can lose in this world, doth not, cannot make him miserable, who is made fit for the world to come: He knoweth he hath an estate setled upon him by his Maker, which cannot be taken away. A man thus made, may say to his spoylers, Ye have taken nothing from me but the scraps and sweepings, the parings and chippings of my estate: The Archers indeed have sorely grieved me, and shot at me, but my bow abides in strength, and the armes of my hands are made strong by the hands of the mighty God of *Jacob*. He that is spiritually made, or made a new creature, is made for ever, and in every strait he may look to God his Maker, as a helper and restorer. He that made us when we were nothing, can help us when we are reduced to a very no-

thing. It is an encouragement to go to God for healing, because he hath wounded us; *Come, and let us return unto the Lord*, (saith the Church) *for he hath torne, and he will heale us, he hath smitten, and he will bind us up*, (Hos. 6. 1.) Much more is it an encouragement to go unto God to be our healer, because he hath been our Maker. He that hath made us, can mend us; He that built us, can repaire us, if we say, as we ought, and have been taught, *Where is God our maker?*

Who giveth songs in the night.

Those words contain a second Consideration, why the oppressed should seek to God; he *giveth songs*, that is, matter of songs, or cause of singing, joy and comfort, even in the night. There are several opinions about the meaning of these words. Some (as I shewed before) interpret this verse of the oppressors; *None (of them) say, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night?* So the words are a description, as of the great worldly security, so of the great worldly felicity of those oppressors. Poor men labour all day hard, and being wearied out with their labours, when night cometh they go to bed; But prophane great and rich men, idle away the day, and sport and play and sing away the night. As good men have holy songs in the night, (*Isa.* 30. 29.) *Ye shall have a song as in the night, when a holy Solemnity is kept*, &c. So the wicked have their wanton, vaine, revelling songs in the night, when their sensual Solemnities are kept. *Belshazer* was drinking in the night, and doubtless, he had his musick & songs that night: And as he had his songs, mirth, and musick in the night, so he said not *Where is God my maker, who giveth me songs in the night*: he instead of minding God his maker in his mirth, minded only the gods which himself had made (as the text speaks, *Dan.* 5. 4.) *They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and of silver*, &c. And thus 'tis in proportion with all the wicked to whom God gives songs in the night, they say not, *Where is God my maker?* This interpretation which carrieth the songs to the oppressors before spoken of, contains a truth, yet I shall not stay upon it, but take the words as referring to the oppressed.

Here it may be queried, how doth God give them songs in the night? I shall not insist upon those conjectures, which some have made about this *giving songs in the night*. As First, implying God so

so gracious, that he giveth us not only in the day, but in the night, occasion of joy in sorrow, namely, the view and contemplation of the Heavens and Starrs, which are very pleasant and refreshing, (*Psal.* 19. 1.)

Others, Secondly, conjecture, that God may be said to give the sorrowful and oppressed ones songs in the night, by the singing of birds in the night, of that bird especially which hath its name from singing in the night, *the Nightingal*. Some insist much upon these interpretations. It is, I grant, a great mercy of God that when the Sun is down, we have Moon-light and Star-light, and that in the night we have the innocent harmless birds to sing and make us pleasant melody. But leaving these, we may take the words in a double notion; First, Properly; Secondly, Metaphorically.

Properly, and so *to give songs in the night*, as the night is taken for night time, imports the goodness of God to man, not only in the day time, but in the night.

Hence Note.

God in the night season, as well as in the day, gives his people matter of joy.

Night-mercies deserve and call for day-praises; especially two sorts of night-mercies; First, Night preservations, (*Psal.* 3. 6.) *I laid me down and slept, for thou Lord makest me to dwell in safety.* The night is subject to many dangers; The Septuagint render fully to this sense; *Who giveth watch or preservation in the night*; that's matter of praise and thanksgiving to God. Secondly, he gives us cause of praise and singing, not only for preserving our lives while we sleep in the night, but for refreshing us with sleep in the night, (*Psal.* 127. 2.) *So he giveth his beloved sleep.* The Lord gives us not only safety, but sleep. Sweet sleep is a great mercy, (*Eccl.* 5. 12.) *The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much*; and they who sleep sweetly get refreshing and renewings of strength after all their former labours, for new labours. So that, if we take *night* properly for the night time, there is much occasion of rejoycing given by God to mankind in general, and more peculiarly to his faithfull servants, in reference to those common mercies of bodily safety, and the return of natural strength and spirits.

Qui distribuit nocturnas custodias. Sept:

Secondly,

Etiam cum nulla ad eum laudandum documenta circumfulgent, intus Spiritu excitat ad laudes. Jun:

Secondly, Take night properly; and then this assertion, *He giveth songs in the night*, may have this meaning; *The Lord gives his people a praising frame of heart in the night season*! When they are wrapped up and compassed about with outward darkness, when they are solitary and alone, when no worldly object holds out any occasion of comfort to them, yet then the Lord sets in a light, or shines into their souls by his good Spirit. The Lord may well be said to give songs even in the night, when by the immediate work of his Spirit, he filleth our spirits with joyes unspeakable and glorious. These are the most ravishing *songs of the night*.

Hence Note.

God by his good Spirit doth often suggest sweet meditations and comfortable thoughts to his people in the night.

In the night the Lord minds his servants either of such mercies as they have already received, or of such, as according to his promise, he is ready to, or will surely bestow, that so they may be busied in that heavenly work of praising him, and rejoycing in him, when they awake or cannot sleep. This was *Davids* experience, (*Psal.* 17. 3.) *Thou hast visited me in the night.* Men use to visit us in the day when we are up or awake. But (saith *David*) God gives me visits in the night, when I am in bed he gives me many a song, or makes me to rejoyce. When we are in our retirements, or freest from the hurry of worldly businesses and enjoyments, then we are in the fittest posture for the entertainment and enjoyment of God. The Lord visits his servants in the night, not only (as *David* there) to try them, or as elsewhere to instruct them, but to comfort them, as *David* was assured, (*Psal.* 42. 8.) *The Lord will command his loving kindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me.* That is, a song concerning him. I will sing and rejoyce, even in the night time, because of the goodness and kindness of God to me in the day. The experience of *Asaph*, or of *David*, communicated in that Psalm to *Asaph*, gives further proof of this, (*Psal.* 77. 6.) where having said, (*v.* 1.) *I cryed unto God with my voyce, and he gave eare unto me:* he adds, (*v.* 6.) *I call to remembrance my song in the night*; that is, those occasions of joy and singing which God hath heretofore given me: These songs were sweeter to me than sleep. As it sheweth an excellent frame of spirit to remember the Commandments of God in the night, which *David* also professed as his practise, (*Psal.* 119. 55.) *I have remembred thy Name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy Law.* The name of God is any manifestation of God, either in his word or works. And again, (*Psal.* 119. 62.) *At midnight I will rise to give thanks to thee, because of thy righteous judgements.* Some watch in the night to give thanks, (*Psal.* 134. 1.) others give thanks when they wake at any time in the night; both are acts of purest love to God, and proceed from purest consolation in God. (Cant. 3. 1.) *By night on my bed I sought him.* The Spouse doth not say only, *by night I sought him*, but *by night on my bed*, I spend not the night in sleeping, but in seeking him whom my soul loveth. (*Psal.* 16. 7.) *My reines instruct me in the night season*; That is, I have as it were discourses and soliloquies, secret debates about, and strong desires after the things of God, even in the night. *That soul is indeed awake to God, which is acquainted with and used to these divine songs in the night, the time of sleep.*

Further, Take the word *night* in a metaphorical notion, as night signifieth a troublesome state; God may be said *to give songs in the night*, when he comforts us in or at any time of affliction. I need not stay to prove that in Scripture the night is put for affliction, nor need I prove, that, to give inward joy in a day of outward sorrow, is to give songs in the night. The observation rising from this metaphorical understanding of night, is this, which the Scripture and experience are full of.

God sends comfort to his people, or causeth them to rejoyce in the midst of their afflictions.

It is the Apostles description of God, (2 *Cor.* 1. 3, 4.) *The God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation.* What sweet songs have suffering Saints found in the darkest midnight of their affliction! What inward peace in outward troubles! What soul freedome in bodily restraint! One of the Ancients hath put the question, and answered it. *What's a song in the night? 'Tis joy in time of trouble.* Whenever God gives a soul joy in time of trouble, he gives a song in the night. *Paul* and *Silas* sang in the night, in both notions of night. If we take night in a proper sense, they sang in the night, and in an improper sense, they were

Carmen in nocte est lætitia in tribulatione. Greg:

were in prison, that was a night of affliction to them, yea it was midnight with them, the power of darkness, or the darkest outward affliction to them, yet, saith the Text, *At midnight Paul and Silas sang*: They had songs in their mouths, and in their hearts too; they sang so loud that all heard them. And hence we may collect the strength of the argument or reason upon which *Elihu* here saith, God doth not regard the cry of many under oppression, they make a noyse, but none saith, *Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night*, who is able to comfort us in all our afflictions, who is able to make darkness light to us, and turn our sorrows into songs of joy; they had not these high thoughts of God, nor these holy confidences in God, while they lay under the oppressions of men, and therefore God did not regard their cry, nor save them from the arme of the mighty. This is the first part of the answer which *Elihu* made to *Jobs* complaint, that the oppressed were not delivered, though being pressed so sorely they could not forbeare to cry, yea to cry out in their misery. The next words give us a fuller and more expresse answer to that complaint.

Vers. 11. *Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowles of heaven.*

Vers. 12. *There they cry (but none giveth answer) because of the pride of evil men.*

Vers. 13. *Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.*

Elihu proceeds in assigning a second reason to highten their sin, who being in distresse, say not, *Where is God my maker?* or he giveth a further account, why the Lord doth not presently attend to the prayers and crys of some men under great oppression. He had shewed in the former verse one reason of the Lords forbearance to help them in such distresses, they did not say heartily, *Where is God our maker?* nor did they remember him according to the special benefits which they sometimes had received from God, even *songs in the night*.

In this 11th verse, *Elihu* aggravates the sin of such oppressed persons by the consideration of that light, & understanding wherewith God hath indued, and inriched man above the irrational creatures, and

and which he hath therefore furnished man with, that he might know what to do in a time of distress, in the day of affliction; *they say not, Where is God my maker?*

Who, not only *gives us songs in the night*, (matter of praise, but) *teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth.*

Some of the Jewish Interpreters read these words positively, not (as we) comparatively, or they render them, to shew that God hath appointed the very beasts to be our Tutors, not (as we) that himself tutors us beyond the beasts: Thus; *Who teacheth us by the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wise by the fowls of heaven.* This answers what *Job* spake in the 12th Chapter of this book, (*v.* 7.) *Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee: and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee.* 'Tis a truth that God doth teach us by the beasts of the earth, and makes us wise by the very fowls of the air. We may learn much in the School of those creatures who have not only no learning, but no understanding, and may be stirred up to the exercise of excellent vertues, by those which have not the exercise of reason. The Scripture sendeth man, the highest of visible creatures, to the lowest of visible creatures, to creatures so little, that they are scarce visible, for instruction; *Go to the Ant thou sluggard, consider her wayes, and be wise*, (Pro. 6. 6.) There are several observable qualities, and, as I may call them, vertues, not only in the beasts of the earth, and fowls of the air, but in the meanest creeping things, which are very imitable by man; and thus God doth teach us by the beasts of the earth, and by the fowls of the air, vertually, though not formally, by their practise and example, though not by their precepts or rules; for such teachings neither the beasts of the earth nor the fowls of the air have any competency at all. Man alone cannot teach man effectually to conversion and salvation; all that are so taught, are and must be taught of God, (1 *Cor.* 3. 5, 6, 7.) yet the beasts of the earth, and the fowls of the air, may and do teach us instrumentally to conviction, and if we learn not by them, their teachings (as rude as they are) will be to our shame, confusion, and condemnation.

But I rather take the words, as we translate them, comparatively; *Who teacheth us more than the beast of the earth*: As if he had said, *God teacheth, he doth it somewhat, but he teacheth man much more.*

Quidem Hebræorum specialiter eo referunt, ne bestiarum aut avium more invicem rapiamur. Merc:

They who expound this context of the wicked man, who oppresseth the poor, give the sense thus; *God teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven*; that is, he teacheth us that we should not like beasts, vex, tear and rend one the other, that we should not like the Bear of the Wood, and the Lyon of the Forrest, nor like the Vultures and ravenous Birds of the air, prey one upon another; They who are fierce against, and unmerciful to their brethren, degenerate into beasts, whom God hath taught no better, but left them to live by rapine and spoyle: Whereas he hath laid more noble principles into the heart of man, and taught him to be kind & charitable, loving, and compassionate, not to devoure and vex those of his kind, how much soever inferior and below him in degree. And therefore what a shame is it for men to be more oppressive and cruel to men like themselves, than beasts are to beasts, or fowls to fowls? This is a truth: yet I conceive the context is rather to be understood of the oppressed, (as hath been touched before) than of the oppressor, and therefore our reading runs most clearly;

Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth.

לִמֵּד *in Kal differe in piel docere significat. Deus non majori familiaritate & consuetudine dignatur, quam bestias.*

That is, though the very beasts of the earth, are taught somewhat by God, and have a kind of knowledge, yet men are taught of God in a more eminent, transcendent, and noble way, than they, whether wild, or tame, one or other. God doth not set up such a School for beasts, as he doth for man, nor provide such instructions for them, as he doth for man; He gives men more means of instruction, he gives them more time for instruction, he takes (as I may say) more paines to instruct them, rising early, and sending his Ministers now, as the Prophets of old, to teach his people. He every way *teacheth us more than he teacheth the beasts of the earth*;

And maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven.

But what? Are the fowls of the air indued with wisdome? I answer, First, wisdome is put sometime for that inbred subtlety, which is no more than an inclination to avoyd that which is hurtful to nature, and to follow that which is suitable to it. That which is wisdome indeed is the proper and peculiar gift of God to men and Angels only. God hath given somewhat like wisdome to the fowls

fowls of heaven, they have a natural forecast; But what is the wisdome, with which the fowls of heaven are indued, to that wisdome with which man is indued, those men especially, who (through grace) are heires of heaven? What is the wisdome which beasts have by a common instinct, to the wisdome which man hath by divine instruction, yea sometimes by divine inspiration. Beasts and birds are wise, they are taught by God what is convenient for their state, yet the best of their knowledge is ignorance, and the top of their understanding folly, compared with man. And hence it is that when men act foolishly or uncomely, they are said in Scripture to be like beasts; to corrupt themselves like brute beasts, to be brutish in their knowledge. We may easily conclude the wisdome of birds and beasts extreamly below mans, seeing whensoever man acts below himself, or doth any thing unwisely, he is said to be and do like a beast. The Hebrew word which we translate *wiser*, being applyed in Scripture to Emmets or Ants, to Conies, to Locusts, to Spiders, (*Pro.* 30. 24.) doth not imply, that they truly know either what or why they do such or such a work, it only sheweth that the work which they do, hath an order, usefulnes, and reason in it, according to knowledge. *Solomon* saith indeed, those foure little creatures are *exceeding wise*, not that they exceed the wisdome of man, but among brutes they exceed, or are among them of the first forme for wisdome. *He maketh us wiser than the fowls of the air.*

חכם *Do formicæ, cuniculis, locustis, araneis dicitur; non quod sciant quid & cur agant, sed quod ipsum opus habeat ordinem utilitatem & rationem.* Coc:

Hence observe, First,

The beasts of the earth, and fowls of the air, have a kind of knowledge, and wisdome;

They have somewhat which is Analogous to or like knowledge and wisdome, yet neither knowledge nor wisdome strictly taken. Some of the Ancients have reported to us, the opinion of the *Manichees*, and *Marcionites*, who maintained, that the beasts of the earth, and fowls of the air, were indued with reason, properly so called; which opinion was by them justly numbred among heresies, and indeed a little reason may serve for the refutation of that opinion, which asserts beasts and fowls indued with reason; Though some other learned men in their time, and Great Philosophers have asserted as much as the *Manichees* or *Marcionites* in this poynt. *Quintilian* said, that beasts did rather want an abi-

Augustinus lib. 6. contra Faustum Manichæum. Epiph: lib. 1. Hær: 42.

lity.

lity of speaking, than of understanding: And *Plutarch* endeavoureth to prove the same in his Dialogue about that Question, *Whether brute Beasts have or are endued with Reason?* But we affirm the wisdome of Brutes is only brutish, and at most, but similitudinary to the rational actings of man & a similitude of, or somwhat like wisdom and reason cannot with reason be denyed them. It's said of the Serpent (*Gen.* 3.1.) that he *was more subtil than any Beast of the field, which the Lord God had made.* And when Christ saith, (*Math.* 10. 16.) *Be ye as wise as Serpents,* he implyeth, according to that in *Genesis*, that Serpents have some shadow of wisdome, somwhat like wisdome. And when the Prophet *Jeremiah* (Chap. 8. 7.) saith, *The Stork, the Turtle, the Crane, and the Swallow, know the time of their coming,* he affirms that those Fowls have a kind of knowledge. Another Prophet upbraids men with the Knowledg of Beasts, (*Isa.* 1. 3.) *The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Masters Crib, but,* &c. Here in the Text, to learn or be taught is ascribed to Beasts, because they are tamed, broken, brought to hand, and made useful for the service of man. And wisdome is ascribed to the Fowls of the Air, because they keep their seasons duly, make their Nests safely and fitly, and bring up their young ones tenderly, with pains and diligence. There are very strange instances, scarce credible, given by *Pliny* and others, concerning the sagacity and docibility of some Beasts of the earth, and Fowls of the Air; we are told how they have acted more like rational creatures, than brutes: And daily experience gives proof enough, that they have a kind of knowledge, reason and wisdome, only we cannot allow them reason, wisdome, or knowledge in kind: They do works of Reason and Understanding, only (which is mans excellency) they understand not the reason of their works.

Secondly, Note;

The knowledge or wisdome (such as it is) that the Beasts of the Earth, and Fowls of the Air have, is of God.

If he *teacheth men more than the Beasts of the earth, and maketh them wiser than the Fowls of the Air,* then in some way and measure he teacheth them, and maketh them wise. That wisdome and knowledge, whatsoever it is, which Beasts and Fowls have, is planted in them by God; they have that which serves their turn,

turn, and answers their state, by a common instinct of nature, which man hath answerable to his state, either by immediate Revelation, or by means of instruction from God. So then, Beasts and Birds receive their peculiar qualities and abilities from God, as well as their Being: And God hath bestowed those qualities, which are shadows of wisdome and understanding, upon Beasts and Birds, not only for their own preservation, but for the benefit of man, that they may be more useful to him, and fitter for his service. As God hath made both Man and Beast for himself, so he hath made the Beasts of the Earth, and Fowls of the Air for Man, either to serve mans necessity, or to procure his honest delight: And that they might reach both these ends, he hath furnished them accordingly. A creature which hath not somwhat in it like Reason, could be little made use of by the Reason of Man.

Thirdly, Note;

Man is far better taught, than either the Beasts of the Earth, or Fowls of the Air.

Man, as Man, hath that in him, which wonderfully exceeds the Beasts of the Earth and Fowls of the Air; he hath Reason in him, which they have not; he is a reasonable creature, which they are not, and so can do that which they cannot. Man, by the power of Reason is able, first, to propose to himself an end in what he doth; secondly, to chuse fit means for the attaining of that end; neither of which Beasts can do. And if any man be without wisdome to propose to himself a right end, and to chuse due means leading thereunto, there's little difference between that man and a beast, surely all his wisdome is but brutish. Further, God hath not only given Man a sense of those things which are hurtful to him, as he hath to the Beasts of the Earth and Fowls of the Air; but God hath given Man an Understanding, by which, he knowing God, may worship him, by which also he may see into and foresee the causes of things, and likewise rightly apply known means, either to prevent or remedy evils, and to bring about that which is good. Again, as God hath bestowed that wonderful blessing of Reason upon Man, above Beasts and Fowls, which makes him capable of higher instructions and fruitions, than either of them; so God hath provided higher and better means for the instruction of Man, than he hath for the instruction of Beasts. *He teacheth us more.* For,

First,

First, He hath given his Word to Man, not to Beasts; he hath not made a Bible for the Beast of the Earth, and the Fowls of the Air; but for Man he hath, that he might both know his will and do it, know his favour or good will to him, and enjoy it. Secondly, He hath given some men his Spirit; he hath not bestowed his Spirit upon any Beasts, nor upon any Fowls of the Air: and because his Spirit teacheth us, we are said to be taught of God, eminently taught of God. Thirdly, he hath given us his Ordinances, and appointed Officers, or set persons in Office, to mannage and hold out those Ordinances, wherein himself is both honoured and enjoyed. *He* (saith the Apostle, *Eph.* 4. 11, 12.) *gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers; for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ*, for the bringing in, and building up of souls. *He sheweth his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and Judgments unto Israel*, (Psal. 147. 19.) and as it follows in the next verse of the same *Psalm, He hath not dealt so with any Nation*, as with his *Israel*, his Church, to be sure he hath not dealt so with the Beasts of the Earth, nor with the Fowls of the Air, as was shewed also in opening the Text.

Further as to the matter in question about the Providences and dealings of God with man; God hath taught Man much more than Beasts: As First, That all things which befall us, come from, and are ordered by himself. Secondly, That we ought to receive the Rule and take instruction from God, how to behave our selves under his various dealings. Thirdly, He hath taught us at all times, and in all turns of Providence, to stay our selves in waiting upon him, (*Psal.* 37. 7.) Fourthly, He hath taught us in times of trouble and affliction, to cry to him, and call upon him as his children in faith, not barely to complain, much less to be impatiently outragious like Beasts.

Now if God hath taught us more than the Beasts, then, we should not live by sense, nor pursue sensible things, as Beasts do, but aspire to and seek after union and communion with God, whom the beasts of the earth know not. How greatly will this aggravate the sin of man, if having been taught more than beasts, any man should be found to have learned less than beasts; as will appear yet more in the next observation but one.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, *Elihu* at least intimates this Note;

Men sometimes act but as, or indeed below, the very beasts of the earth, and the fowls of the air.

For (saith he) they say not, *Where is God our maker, who gives us songs in the night? who teacheth us better*, or more, *than the beasts of the earth.* As if he had said, The beasts of the earth answer the instinct of nature, (which is all the cost God bestows in teaching them) better than men do those costly teachings and instructions which God bestows upon them by his Word, by his Spirit, by his Ministers, by his Ordinances, and by his Providences; for all these wayes doth the Lord teach and instruct men from day to day; yet men often act, not only beside and below, but quite contrary to all these teachings. The beasts of the earth keep up to the instruction which they have received, the instinct of nature, they move according to that; but man who hath an understanding, doth not alwayes move suitably to his understanding; man hath reason, yet he doth not alwayes regulate his motions by reason, but is hurried by passion, or led by sense, as a beast. (*Psal* 49. 20.) *Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish*; that is, though his state and spheare be higher than a beast, yet he moves by as low a principle as a beast, even by sense, or sensual appetite, either irrascible, or concupiscible, as a beast doth. By the man in honour, that understandeth not, the Psalmist intends not a fool that hath no understanding, nor an Idiot that hath no use of reason, but he is said not to understand, because he doth not use his understanding; as he in the Parable that did not use his Talent, is said to have none, (*Mat.* 25. 29.) Understanding is a Talent, and a great one, a choyce one too. A man that hath the greatest natural understanding and reason, yea possibly the greatest learning, and experience, may be said, *not to understand*, when he doth not behave himself understandingly, or according to the Lawes and Rules of reason. Men of the best understanding and greatest honour are like the beasts that perish, as to their frailty, that is, they dye; which may be the meaning of the Psalmist at the 12th verse, where he saith, *Man being in honour abideth not, he is like the beasts that perish.* But all men that are in honour and understand not their duty, or do not what they understand, are like the beasts that perish, as to their

In extremam stultitiæ meam incidimus, si sapientiores nos esse putemus, quid sapientes nos facit.

inability, that is, they live as if they had nothing, but (what beasts have) sense and appetite to govern their lives by. He that doth not practise according to knowledge what he knows, is like, and worse than a beast that hath no knowledge. For when a beast doth any thing absurdly, he doth like a beast; but when man doth any thing absurdly, he degenerates or falleth from his own forme, he doth not like a man, and therefore is worse than a beast. And that's it, I conceive, which the Apostle *Jude* aimes at in the 10th verse of his Epistle, where rebuking a very vile generation of men, *Revilers, who speak evil of those things which they know not*; he presently adds, *But what they know naturally as brute-beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.* When he saith, *what they know naturally as brute-beasts*, his meaning is, what they know in common with beasts, that is, by sense and appetite, which are common to man and beast, (as reason and understanding are common to Man and Angels) Now (saith the Apostle) *what they know naturally as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves*, which brute beasts do not. For these words, *as brute beasts*, are to be taken in construction and interpretation, with the former part of the sentence, *What they know naturally*, not with the latter, *they corrupt themselves*. Their knowledge indeed is no better than the knowledge of brute beasts, natural, but in corrupting themselves they are unlike to, and do worse than brute beasts, who run not to such excesses; yet there is nothing more common in Scripture, than to say that men act the beast, when they sin, and put off those manners which become and are worthy of an ingenuous and rational man. For as man is partaker both of a spiritual and sensitive nature, so he takes his denomination from that part to which in his disposition and conversation he most inclines: Hence he is sometimes called *God*, or an *Angel of God*, and sometimes he is compared to the most hurtful of beasts, a Lyon, sometimes to the worst of beasts, to a Fox, to a Wolfe, to a Dog, to a Swine, to a generation of Vipers, to what not, which may put a mark of dishonour and reproach upon him.

Fifthly, Note;

It's a great shame, reproof, and reproach to man, when he acts unanswerably to the teachings of God.

It is better to be a beast in or by nature, than to be a beast (and continue

continue so) in qualities and conditions. O what a reproach is it, that they who have a far better nature than beasts, should lead no better lives than a beast, yea possibly much worse! The Psalmist crys shame upon such (*Psal.* 32. 9.) *Be ye not as the Horse, or as the Mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.* The Horse and Mule are unruly creatures, if left to their own rule, they have no understanding how to mannage and order themselves; they must be mannaged and order'd by bit and bridle in the hand of a skilful rider, else they do more hurt than good service to those that come near them: Now, saith the Lord to man, Be not you like the untaught or unmannag'd Horse and Mule; as ye are better taught, so ye should have better manners. We say of some men, they are better fed than taught; and we may say of many men, they are better taught than manner'd; they mend not their manners, though daily taught, yea urged to mend them. For this neglect the Lord reproves the sluggard, (*Pro.* 6. 6.) *Go to the Ant thou sluggard, consider her wayes, and be wise*; thou dost not answer natural, much less Scriptural light, thou dost not learn by any teachings; one of the least of my creatures may teach thee more than thou hast yet learned of all the teachers which I have sent thee. The little Ant that dwels upon a Mole-hil, that creeps upon the ground, may teach thee better manners, and make thee wiser. Art thou not ashamed to need such a teacher, having had so many teachers? That's also the sense of those rebukes which the Prophet powres out (with a strong contestation) upon the people of *Israel*, calling Heaven and Earth to witness against them, (*Isa.* 1. 2.) *Hear O Heavens, and give ear O Earth, I have nourished, and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.* But how doth the Lord convict them of rebellion, and by whom? even by the teachableness and tractableness of the dullest brutes, *The Ox knoweth his owner, and the Ass his Masters crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.* As if he had said; The Ox, and the Ass out-do you, the Ox knoweth his owner that feeds him, and the very Ass knows the crib where he is fed. These beasts take notice of, regard and submit to their Master and Benefactor: but *Israel* doth neither observe nor submit to me, who have tenderly nursed and plentifully nourished them; who have (as the Lord spake by his Prophet, *Hos.* 11. 4.) *been to*

them, as one that taketh the yoke off their jawes, and layeth them meat, the fat and the sweet, the finest of the wheat, and honey out of the Rock to feed upon; and, which is more than this, who have not only fed them better, but taught them better than the Ox or Ass; O ye Heavens, be astonished at this! Further, as in this Scripture the Lord contested with, and reproved his people by the beasts of the earth, so he doth it in another by the fowls of the air, (*Jer.* 8. 6, 7.) *I* (saith the Lord) *hearkned and heard, but they spake not aright*, &c. *every one turned to his course*, (his sinful course, or his course in sin) *as the Horse rusheth into the battle*; that is, fiercely, fearlessly, presumptuously, at once slighting, at least forgetting, both their own danger, and my command. As the Lord thus rebukes the head-strong obstinacy and wilfulness of that people, by their likeness to the Horse; so in the next verse he reproves their blindness and blockishness, by their unlikeness to the Stork, &c. *Yea the Stork in the Heaven knoweth her appointed time, and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow observe the time of their coming, but my people know not the Judgements of the Lord.* Then followeth, (*v.* 8.) *How do ye say, we are wise, and the Law of the Lord is with us; Lo certainly in vaine made he it, the pen of the Scribe is in vaine:* As if he had said; You have been taught, you have had the Law of the Lord, and you are ready to boast of it, as the Apostle observed (*Rom.* 2, 23.) but with what face can ye take it upon your selves to be wise men, or arrogate wisdome to your selves, or so much as own the Law, when you are so unready to pay that obedience which you owe to it. The Crane, the Turtle, and Swallow, the very fowls of Heaven, follow the light of nature better than you have done the light of Scripture and daily instruction. These reasonless creatures, reason with themselves more rationally than you have done; They say thus in themselves, It is best for us to change our quarters, and take our flight to some more benigne or milder region, for here the season grows sharp, and the weather tempestuous, if we abide here we starve, we perish with cold and hunger: But you my people are so sottish, that you change neither your minds nor manners, you mend neither your wayes nor your works; what changes soever I bring upon you, or how much soever I vary my wayes and workings towards you, you apply not your selves to my course and dealings with you, but still take your own course, say

say I or do I what I will; you neither embrace seasons of grace and offers of mercy, nor do ye labour either to prevent or to avoyd those storms of wrath and divine vengeance, with which you have been often threatned, and which hang in the clouds ready to drop down and overwhelme you. And will ye say after all this, *we are wise*, when the fowls of the air appear wiser than you? And will you say, *the Law of the Lord is with us*, when they guide themselves better by the Law of nature? And forasmuch as it is thus with you, have I not reason to conclude, that, *Lo, certainly in vaine made he it, the pen of the Scribe is in vaine*; that is, it was to little or no purpose that God at first enacted and published his Law, (*Exod.* 20.) or appointed Scribes to write it out, that Copies of it might be transferred to and read by his people, (*Deut.* 17. 18. *Chap.* 31. 9.) Is not both the making and writing of the Law vaine, (as to you) seeing you are thus vaine and foolish, even much more vaine and foolish than the Stork in the Heaven, than the Turtle, Crane, and Swallow, notwithstanding the making and writing out of the Law for you?

This will fill the faces of the wicked, that is, both of the prophane and formal professors of the Lords name, with shame and confusion for ever, when they shall be made to see and confesse, that the beasts of the earth have followed their light, better than they, though God hath taught them more than the beasts of the earth; and that the fowls of the air have carried themselves more wisely than they, though God hath *made them wiser than the fowls of the air.*

Vers. 12. *There they cry (but none giveth answer) because of the pride of evil men.*

When *Elihu* had thus closely hinted the sin of those persons that acted below beasts and birds in their afflictions, he proceeds to tell us, what they do in their affliction; *There they cry (but none giveth answer.)* We translate these words, *But none giveth answer*, in a parenthesis; we may read the verse without it, and transferre those words to the end of the verse, *There they cry, because of the pride of evil men, but none giveth answer.* That is, (as some give the meaning) they being oppressed by the pride of evil men, cry out of their insolencies, and their own miseries, and yet can get no answer; for the reasons given in the two former

מפני גאון רעים
A facie-bus superbiæ malorum. Mont: *Propter superbiam malorum.* Pagn: *Ibi vel tunc, Adverbia loci pro adverbiis temporis passim ponuntur.* Merc:

mer verses, that is, because they do not heartily and believingly apply themselves to God their Maker. Mr *Broughton* understands it thus of the pride of oppressors; *There* (saith he) *they cry, but he answers not concerning the wrong-doers pride.* Others take it for the pride of the oppressed; *There they cry.* The word rendred *there*, is an Adverb of place, but here it notes the time or estate rather in which these persons lived; they were in an oppressed estate or condition, when they cryed, yet saith the Text, *None giveth answer*; that is, they have no help when they cry; they cry to men, yea they cry to God for help, but have none, help is far from them. God doth not answer them immediately by himself, neither doth he send them answer by the hand of any other. Now, what is the reason of this? The Text gives it partly (yet somewhat obscurely) in this verse, more fully and clearly in the verse following. The reason given here is their pride, *Because of the pride of evil men*; that is, because themselves are so proud, they are at once poor and proud, humbled but not humble; they are oppressed and subdued under the power of men, yet their pride remains unsubdued and in full power; they are laid low in estate, but they are not lowly in spirit: proud men oppress them, and they, though oppressed, are still proud; their hearts are not brought down, though they are come down *wonderfully*, as the Prophet spake of the captivated *Jewes*, Lam. 1. 9. They are fallen before men in misery, but they are not fallen before God in humility; they cry of wrong, but themselves are not right, and that's the reason why they are not righted; *There they cry (but none giveth answer) because of the pride of evil men.* This also is a good sense, and may yeild us profitable instruction; I leave the Reader to his choyce, both being safe and usefull. *There they cry*, &c.

Note hence.

First, *They that are oppressed, and brought low, will be crying and complaining,*

Both God and Men shall hear of them: *There they cry.* An afflicted condition, is a complaining condition; Nature being pinch't will speak. *I* (said *Job*, Chap. 7. 11.) *will not refraine my mouth, I will speak in the anguish of my heart, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. I mourn in my complaint*, said *David*, (*Psal.*

Psal. 55. 2.) The title of the 102d Psalm runs thus; *A prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed, and powreth out his complaint before God.*

Note;

Secondly, *Some in their afflictions do nothing but cry, nothing but complain.*

Elihu doth not say, There they repent, and there they humble themselves, and there they turn to God, but *there they cry*; that they are troubled is the all, the only thing that troubles them. 'Tis said before, *God teacheth man more than the beasts of the Earth*; but many in a day of affliction, do no more than the Beasts of the Earth. A Beast, when hurt, will cry, he will rage and roare; and that's as much as many men do when they are hurt, though God hath taught them more, many lessons more, which they should be practising under sorrowful dispensations. The Ox loweth, and is taught no more, when he wants fodder, the Ass brayeth, and is taught no more, when he wants grasse; but man is taught to act repentance, and faith, and patience, and submission to the will of God in want. How sad is it when we hear nothing but flesh cry in man, or when nothing is cryed for by man but flesh, that is, the supplyes of Nature, in the day of his distress. As 'tis said of those (*Hosea* 7. 14.) *They have not cryed unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds; they assemble themselves for corn, and for wine, and they rebel against me.* How miserable are they in their miseries, whose tongues cry to God, but not their hearts, or their hearts being silent; who cry for corne and wine, not for grace and repentance, or not for grace to repent; who cry much because they suffer evil, but not at all because they have done evil, yea who are doing evil at the very time when they are crying out because of the evils which they suffer? Such was the wretched frame of those in the Prophet; *They assembled themselves for corne and for wine, and rebelled against God.* 'Tis bad enough, when there is crying, and nothing but crying, this is to cry but as beasts cry; but to cry and rebel against God, is to be worse than beasts, for beasts do not rebel against God when they are pinched with want, and cry. It is sad to be in afflictions; to be put to cry in afflictions is more sad; only to cry for the affliction is yet more sad, when nothing comes

comes from a man but a cry, there is nothing in the cryer, but what is meerly of man; but to be found sinning against God, while we are crying out in our affliction is most sad, that's the saddest and worst condition of man in affliction. The Lord teacheth his people better, let us shew our selves better taught, than only to cry in our afflictions; and let it be the abhorrence of our souls for ever to sin at all, much more to sin up to rebellion against God in our affliction, that it should be said of any of us as of that wicked King *Ahaz*, (2 *Chron.* 28. 22.) that in the time of any distress, we have trespassed more against the Lord.

Thirdly, Whereas those oppressed ones cryed, yet (according to the second interpretation) continued proud and naught.

Observe,

The greatest oppression and worldly trouble, cannot break the power of sin, nor bring down the proud heart of man.

Neither oppression from man, nor affliction from God, can break the pride of mans spirit. These were oppressed, yet proud still. Our estates may be broken, our relations broken, our comforts broken, yet our hearts remain unbroken. The oppressed are many times, as proud as their oppressors, and they who are unjustly dealt with, are as bad as they that deale unjustly with them. Oppressors (though not all who oppress) are alwayes bad, and the oppressed are many times so too, even as bad as their oppressors. There is no proof of any mans grace or goodness by this, that he is oppressed, or wronged; for he may be wronged, and ground to powder with oppression, yet his heart as hard as a nether Milstone, and his spirit as high, and as much lifted up as *Lucifers*. There is nothing in affliction, trouble, or oppression, that can humble the heart of man; the Spirit of God, God himself must do it. Outward changes work no inward change; we may be emptied from vessel to vessel, from one condition to another, yet have our fin-sent remaining in us. It was, indeed, said of *Moab*, (*Jer.* 48. 11.) *He hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity*, (that is, he hath not been troubled much in his own Land, nor carried into strange Lands, as *Israel* hath been) *therefore his taste remained in him, and his sent is not changed*; that is, as he still retains his civil state and strength, so his spiritual vanity, impiety, and impurity, even as Wines that have

have not been drawn off the Lees, and put into other Cask, (to that the Scripture there alludes) retain their first taste and sent or smel, and are not meliorated or made more fit for the palat and stomack of those that drink them. Now (I say) as many for want of changes or afflictions, are not mended, so some mend not though they have many changes and afflictions; nor can any thing or affliction mend us, or work a change of heart and life in us, unlesse grace work with it.

Fourthly, Whereas it is said, *they cry, but none giveth answer*, God doth not hear and answer them;

Note;

The crys of proud, or bad men, how much soever they are oppressed, do not move God, nor will he answer them.

There is no reason he should answer their cry, (though they have reason enough to cry) who will not answer his call, his command; let such cry and cry, tear the air, and rend their throats with crying, they shall not be answered. *Job* saith of the hypocrite, (*Chap.* 27. 9.) *Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?* No, he will not. *Solomon* leaves the contemners of wisdoms counsel under the same doom, (*Pro.* 1. 28.) *Then shall they call, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.* But when was this *Then* in which they called, and the Lord would not answer? The 27th verse tells us, The *when* or time of this rejection, it was when they had most need of hearing and acceptation, even when their feare (that is, the thing feared, or at least which made them afraid) came upon them, as desolation, and *their destruction as a whirlwind*; when those sad Messengers came they sought God *early*, that is, earnestly and diligently, but could not find him: But what was the reason of this refusal? *They hated knowledge, and did not chuse the fear of the Lord*, (v. 29.) They had been wicked, and naught, before trouble came, and when trouble was come they were no better, therefore the Lord regarded not either their persons or their cryes. *The Lord* (saith the Apostle preaching to the *Athenians*, *Acts* 17. 27.) *is not far from every one of us*; yet 'tis said (*Pro.* 15. 29.) *The Lord is far from the wicked, but he heareth the prayer of the righteous:* He is far, that is, far from hearing and answering, far from helping and relieving the wicked when they pray. The

Lord is not far from any of us as men, *for in him we live, move, and have our being*, (v. 28.) *and he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things*, for the support of life and natural being; but he is far from all proud men, as to any complacency in their persons, and as to the hearing of their prayers. He is far from hearing them, and he knows them a far off, (*Psal.* 138. 6.) that is, he deals with them as with men at a distance. Thus the Lord told the impenitents among his own people by the Prophet, (*Isa.* 1. 15.) *Though you make many prayers, I will not hear, for your hands are full of blood.* Ye are full of bloody sins, and ye have not humbled yourselves, nor cleansed your hearts and hands by the blood of the Covenant to this day; and being in that case, you may cry and pray till your hearts ake, and your tongues ake too, yet no prevailing with God, no grant, no hearing. Another Prophet tells them as sad newes from the Lord, (*Jer.* 11. 11.) *Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape*, (or, *go forth of*) *and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken to them.* Though the Lord threatned, *I will bring such evil upon them, that they shall not escape*; they might say, well, but when the evil hath taken hold of us, we hope God will hear us, and deliver us. No, saith God, when the evil hath overtaken and arrested you, yet your prayers shall not overtake me; *Though you cry, yet I will not hearken unto you.* That's a dreadful Scripture of the same import, (*Psal.* 18. 41.) *They cryed, but there was none to save them: even unto the Lord, but he answered them not.* They cryed being in great distresse, and they cryed to the Lord; he brings in that, lest any should say, they cryed indeed, but possibly 'twas to false gods, to idols, possibly they knockt at a wrong doore, and so were not heard: No, they cryed to the Lord, to the Lord by name; they were right as to the object of prayer, but their hearts were not right; they were not right subjects of prayer. That once blind man saw this truth, when answering the Pharisees about the person by whose power he received his sight, he told them plainly, (*Joh.* 9. 31.) *We know that God heareth not sinners*; that is, *Such as love and live in sin, such as go on impenitently in their sins.* By this answer he closely, but strongly confuted that blasphemous opinion and censure of the Pharisees, who reputed and reported the Lord Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, as one of the vilest sinners in the world, and upon that account got

got him crucified at last. As if the man had said, Were he that cured me of my blindness such a sinner as you reckon him to be, he could never have obtained power from God to cure me of my blindness, *for we know God heareth not sinners.* When men sin and pray as it were by turns, their prayers are turned into sin, and therefore will not be returned in mercy. God sometimes hears sinners in wrath and judgement, and he sometimes will not hear Saints, as to the grant of the thing in hand prayed for, in love and mercy; but he never denies praying Saints in wrath, nor doth he ever hear a sinner (such a one as is here intended) in mercy when he prayeth.

Now, as when the Disciples heard Christs answer to the Pharisees question about Divorce, they presently said, (*Matth.* 19. 10.) *If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry*; so some hearing this doctrine, that God heareth not proud sinners when they cry or pray, may possibly say, if the case of the proud be thus with God, it is not good for them to pray at all. To such I answer, this doctrine is not urged to make proud or impenitent sinners to leave praying, but to leave their pride, 'tis urged to make them humble under their oppressions and afflictions, not to make them prophane. They who (as they are) cannot get by prayer, certainly they cannot get by casting off prayer. What answer can they have who cry not at all to God, when some may cry and get no answer! as *Elihu* here speaks, *There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of wicked men.* This sense or interpretation most insisted upon in this 12th verse, will appear more full and faire in opening the 13th in which *Elihu* brings down what he said here into a strong and peremptory conclusion; or the next verse renders another reason why God would not relieve those oppressed ones, It was not only for the pride of their spirits, (*v.* 12.) but also for the emptiness and heartlessness of their prayers; or because the prayers of proud and evil men are heartless or empty.

Ad dicti superiora confirmationem Ephonematis vice subjicit.

Vers. 13. *Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.*

They cry, but God will not hear: why will he not hear? what hinders? He tells us both why and what.

Surely God will not hear vanity.

What is vanity? What saith vanity? hath vanity a tongue? can vanity speak? the Text saith, *God will not hear vanity.* 'Tis frequent in Scripture, to ascribe a tongue, and a voyce to sin of any kind; though some sins are more vocall, and speak louder than others, yet all speak. But when he saith, *Surely*, (or, without all Question) *the Lord will not hear vanity*, by *vanity* we are to understand vaine men praying; or *vanity* is put for the prayers and crys of those persons who are as vaine as vanity it self. The word rendred *vanity*, signifieth a *lie*, as also *rashness*, *temerity*; God will neither hear rash-headed, nor false-hearted prayers, he will not hear vaine prayers, or the prayers of vaine men. The Abstract is often put for the Concrete in Scripture, (*Psal.* 107. 42.) *All iniquity shall stop her mouth.* When the Lord brings about that mighty work, the bringing down of the mighty, & sets the poor on high, (those that are at once poor and humble the Lord will set on high), then *Iniquity*, that is, wicked men, men of iniquity, shall stop their mouths, or have their mouths stopt, they shall not have a word to say, as gaine-saying that righteous and glorious work of God. So here, *God will not hear vanity*, that is, vaine men, or men that pray vainly; all that, which men speak, or act, is vaine or vanity, if it be not good, if it be not answerable to the will and ends of God; yea whatsoever prayer doth not proceed from faith, and flow from a pure heart, is vanity, 'tis but straw, and stubble, drosse, and dung. *God will not hear vanity,*

Neither will the Almighty regard it.

He that will not hear, will much lesse regard vanity. The sense is gradual, regarding is more than hearing, we may put both together, he will not hear with regard, nor regard what he hears from such. *The strong God*, who hath all power in his hand, the power of Authority, or the power of a Judge, will not hear vanity. *The All-mighty*, *The All-sufficient*, who hath all power of efficiency in his hand, the nourisher, and preserver, the punisher and correcter of all men; this *Shaddai* will not regard vanity, he will not give it a look with respect, no not one good look. The word signifies to fix, or set the eye with strong intention upon any thing or person. The Prophet *Elisha* spake to this sense, though he used another

רוש *temeritas, falsitas, mendacium; dicitur de re falsa vana, levi & inutili.*

רוש *intendit oculos & visum, intentis & fixis oculis*

another word, when he said to the King of *Israel*, (2 King. 3. 14.) *Were it not that I regard the presence of the King of Judah, I would not look to thee, nor see thee.* The Lord will not regard, he will not look to vanity, to the prayers of vaine men, he will as it were shut his eyes, he will not see though he doth see; *The Almighty will not regard it.*

intuitus est, solicitè observavit.

Hence Note;

First, *The prayers of vaine and evil persons, are vaine things.*

The Text doth not say, their oaths are vaine, and their lies are vaine, and their idle words are vaine, but their cry, their crys in prayer to God are vaine, yea vanity. *There may be vanity in the prayer of a good man, but his prayer is not vanity.* That's a just reproof upon the good works of many, which Christ gave the Angel of the Church of *Sardis*, (Rev. 3. 3.) *I have not found thy works perfect*, or, *I have not found thy works full.* Though that Angel had done good works, and possible was full of good works, yet his works were not full. A man may be full of prayer, pray often, yet his prayer not full, his prayers may be empty, vaine prayers; that's a vaine thing which is an empty thing. How vaine are they whose best things are vanity! If the prayers of a man are vanity, then certainly all is vanity; and we may say of him in the whole bulke of all, he is *vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* When once God calls a mans prayer, and hearing, vanity; when he calls those works, which are good for the matter of them, vanity, then the man is indeed altogether vanity. You will say, when is prayer vanity, or a vaine thing? I shall answer it in a few particulars.

First, That prayer is vaine, or vanity, which is not put up in faith. A faithless prayer is a fruitless prayer. All the prayers of an unbeliever, or of him who is in a state of unbeliefe are vaine; and the prayers of a believer, that is, who is in his state a believer, are vaine, if he hath not faith about that thing for which he prayeth. Now if the prayer of a believer is vaine, when he hath not actual faith, then the prayer of an unbeliever must needs be vaine, who hath no habitual faith.

Secondly, All the prayers that are for our lusts, or when we resolve to continue in the practise of any lust, are vaine prayers. When we do not pray with a purpose to glorifie God, with what we shall obtain by prayer, but only to serve our own turns, and

so

so bestow it upon our lusts, that's a vaine prayer, (*James* 4. 3.) Such praying is rather a mocking than a worshiping of God, a serving of our selves rather than a serving of God. How do they abuse God in prayer, who cry to him for help, whom they have no mind to honour? who would faine be heard of God, yet have no heart to hear God?

Thirdly, That's a vaine prayer, when we pray meerly to get ease, or deliverance from an affliction, not at all minding our profiting by, or the improvement of an affliction. 'Tis not faith in God, but sense of our own smart, which moves to pray, when we rather look how to get off our burdens, than out of our sins, or to get out of the fire, than to get out our drosse; when we pray more to have the plague taken away, than our hard and proud hearts, that is a vaine prayer; 'tis like the prayer of *Pharaoh*, who begged that he might be delivered; but it was the plague of God for his sin, for his hard heart, that troubled him; his hard heart, his sinning against God never troubled him. *Pharaoh*-like prayers, are vaine prayers.

Tales clamores non fides, sed malorum sensus extorquet.

Fourthly, Those prayers are vaine which we make in our own strength. What can those prayers be, which go forth in our strength, seeing we are told that we know not what to pray, much lesse then how to pray, but as the Spirit of God helpeth our infirmities, (*Rom.* 8. 26.) Unlesse the Spirit make intercession for us, that is, make our intercessions for us in our hearts, as Christ maketh intercession for us in heaven, we pray in vaine.

Fifthly, Those are vaine prayers, which we make in our own name, not in the name of Christ. And remember, though it be an easie matter to name Christ in prayer, yet 'tis no easie matter to pray in the name of Christ. 'Tis as common as that which is commonest, for all sorts of people, yea for children, to name Christ in prayer; but to pray in the name of Christ, is the peculiar work of the Spirit in the heart of a true believer. If the Reader desire to know more distinctly what it is to pray in the name of Christ, I refer him for some help towards it to the 17th verse of the 16th Chapter, where also the requisites of pure and powerful prayer, are more fully held out.

Sixthly, Angry passionate prayers are vaine prayers. The Lord loves zeal and much warmth of affection in prayer, but he cannot abide wrath, or any the least sparks of passion in prayer. The Apostles

Apostles Rule is, (1 *Tim.* 2. 8.) *I will that men pray every where, lifting up pure hands, without wrath, and without doubting.* A peaceable heart is as necessary in prayer, as a pure hand. When a soul coming to God in prayer, hath I know not what wrathful and angry disputes within himself against his Brethren, how can he look for a gracious acceptance with God? Will the Lord be pleased with us, while we nourish secret displeasure against our Neighbour? Now be sure when you go to God for mercy and favour, that ye carry no wrath in your spirits towards man, one or other; therefore Christ hath taught us in that most perfect model of prayer, which he hath left us, (when we ask the forgivenesse of our own trespasses) *to forgive those that trespasse against us.* We must lay down our unquiet thoughts of revenge, if we would have favour with, and compassion from God.

Seventhly, Those are vain prayers, which are not both formed and matter'd according to the Will of God, (1 *John* 5. 14.) which are not grounded upon a just cause, and which are not directed to a right end. Besides all these I may add all cold Prayers, sleepy Prayers, slight-spirited or heartless Prayers, meer formal Prayers, tongue-wording Prayers, which are not soul-working and self-affecting Prayers, are, to them who pray so, but vain Prayers, or as the Text speaks, vanity.

These Rules must be observed in all our prayer-addresses to God, else prayer is vain, or vanity; and when the prayer it self is vain, the person praying hath no hearing: *God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.* Consider that, *Elihu* doth not only say, God will not hear, but he adds, *neither will the Almighty regard it.* The doubling of the matter in higher Language intimates something to us; and we may note this from it;

As the Prayers of evil men are vain, so they have not any, the least regard from God:

He will neither hear, nor regard. *David* saith (*Psal.* 66. 18.) *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear my Prayer.* God will not hear a *David*, a good man, as to that particular prayer, if he regard iniquity in his heart, that is, if he hold any, the least complyance or secret correspondence with any sin, yea, if he hath not repented of, and laboured to mortifie every known sin: Doubtless then he will not regard the prayers of evil men, when

when they pray also with an evil mind. And when this, and other Scriptures say, he doth neither hear nor regard them; there is more intended than expressed, even that he doth reject and abhor them, that they are a burden and an abomination to him. The Scripture is much in shewing how much God makes of holy prayers. For first, God hath not only promised to hear, but regard such prayers, (*Psal.* 112. 17.) *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayers*; that is, he highly prizeth and esteemeth them. Secondly, The Scripture telleth us, God delighteth to hear such prayers, they are sweet to him, they are the best musick in his ears; *Let me hear thy voyce, for sweet is thy voyce* (her prayer-voyce he means chiefly) saith Christ to his Spouse, (*Cant.* 2. 14.) Thirdly, The Scripture assureth us, that God looks upon or reckoneth prayer as an honour done to him, 'tis an eminent part of worship, 'tis the giving of him glory; certainly therefore (take prayer purely) God doth regard it very much; he will have regard to that which he hath promised regard to, he will have regard to that which is sweet and delightful to him, which is an honour and brings glory to him; therefore there must needs be a great matter in it, when he saith, *He will not regard a prayer*; such a prayer must needs be very vile, impure, and stark naught in it self, which he thus thrusteth from him, or cannot away with.

It must be confessed, that God sometimes defers to hear (that is, to answer) the prayers of those that call upon him in faith, and even their prayers who call upon him humbly and sincerely. Holy prayers are not alwayes presently answered, but holy prayers are never unregarded, never rejected. 'Tis never said in Scripture, God doth not regard the prayers of a godly man. God may let him stay long for the answer of his prayer, to try his faith, and patience; but he will not slight his prayer. As it is the duty of all men to pray, and the desire or delight of a godly man, (when his heart is in a right frame) to pray, so it is the priviledge of every godly man, that his prayer is heard and regarded. And as it is the sin of most wicked men that they pray not at all, (*Psal.* 14. 4. *Jer.* 10. 25.) so it is the misery of all wicked men, that their prayers, though they make many and long prayers, are not heard, are not regarded. They are far from the grace and feare of God, who regard not to pray unto him; and they are as far from the mercy

mercy and favour of God, whose prayers are not regarded. And if a man be upon such bad terms with God, that he is not regarded, when he is at his best work, his praying-work, O how little is such a one regarded when he is at his worst work, his sinning-work! If some men are not regarded, when they are praying to God, what are they when they are swearing, and blaspheming God, when they are causlesly vexing or oppressing their brethren? If some men are not regarded when they are praying, what are they when they are revelling and reviling! The Lords indignation breaketh out to the utmost against wicked men, when he tells them, the best of their duties, their prayer, is vanity, and though they cry much to him, he will not hear nor regard them. *The Lord hath not said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vaine,* (Isa. 45. 19.) that is, ye shall not seek me in vaine, no, as your prayers are honourable and acceptable unto me, so they shall be profitable and beneficial unto you; you that go forth weeping, bearing, and scattering this precious seed, shall doubtless come again and bring your sheaves with you, your prayers shall be returned with blessings upon your souls, upon your bodies, upon your estates, upon your families, in which you live, as also upon the Nations and upon the Churches among whom you live. Thus the seed of *Jacob* have found and shall further find by the blessed experiences of all these blessings, that God hath not said to them, *Seek ye me in vaine.* He hath only said of them who are vaine, your seekings of me are vaine in themselves, and will be vaine, fruitless, answerless unto you; for *I the Lord will not hear vanity, neither will I the Almighty regard it.*

O JOB,

JOB, Chap. 35. Verſ. 14.

Although thou ſayeſt thou ſhalt not ſee him, yet Judgement is before him, therefore truſt thou in him.

Malto minus ſi dicis, non contemplaris illud (examinaris & judex coram eo & expectis eum. Jun:

There is a two-fold rendring or tranſlation of this 14th verſe; Firſt, Some connecting it with the former, and taking it in a dependance upon what *Elihu* had laſt affirmed concerning God, *He heareth not vanity, neither doth the Almighty regard it*, tranſlate thus, *Much leſs will he hear thee, if thou ſayeſt thou doeſt not look to, or regard this; judge thy ſelf therefore before him, and waite for him.* As if *Elihu* ſhould bring an argument from the leſs to the greater; *God will not hear vanity, nor will the Almighty regard it, how much leſs will he hear thee, who ſayeſt,* (upon the matter) *that thou regardeſt not him, or what he ſaith and doth.* That word, which in the cloſe of the 13th verſe, we render *regard*, is the ſame with that in this 14th verſe, rendered, *ſee*; as if the whole were a rebuke, or a conviction of *Job* for his ſtoutneſs, in not viewing and contemplating the power and prerogative of God as he ought, in laying his hand upon him; and therefore ſaith *Elihu*, if God will not hear thoſe that pray vainly, how much leſs will he regard thee, who ſeemeſt not to regard him? that is, not to humble thy ſelf before him as becomes thee to thy Soveraigne Lord: And thereupon *Elihu* gives him counſel in the cloſe of the verſe; *Judge thy ſelf before him, And then waite for him, or truſt him*, as we render it. Mr *Broughton* ſeems to ſpeak in his tranſlation much to this ſenſe, giving it thus; *So, when thou ſayeſt thou wilt not mark it, judge before him, and waite for him.* As God will not regard vaine prayer, ſo when thou ſayeſt to him, *thou wilt not mark it*, that is, attend to providences as thou oughteſt, he wil not regard thee. There is a truth in this, and the Original word may fairly bear this tranſlation; yet I ſhall not ſtay upon it; but rather take this Context as the beginning of a new argument, than as the inforcement of the former; underſtanding it ſo, the words have yet a reading different from ours.

Another modern tranſlater diſliking the former reading only in the firſt part of the verſe, gives his own, thus; *In this alſo* (thou haſt ſinned) Thoſe words are ſupplyed to make up the ſenſe, as being the bringing in of a further charge againſt *Job*) *In this alſo* (*thou haſt ſinned*) *that thou haſt ſaid, thou ſhalt not ſee him; judge therefore thy ſelf before him, and look for him.* This is the matter of his new charge, *Thou haſt ſaid, thou ſhalt not ſee him, this is thy ſin.* And having given him this charge, *Elihu* gives him counſel according to this tranſlation in the cloſe of the verſe, *Judge therefore thy ſelf before him, and look for him.* We ſay in our tranſlation, *Judgement is before him*, that is, before God; this tranſlation ſaith, *Judge thy ſelf before him*; and the reaſon of it is becauſe ſome take the word here as a Noune, others as a Verb of the Imparative mood; *Judge thy ſelf before him, and then look to him, or truſt in him*; that is, thou haſt failed greatly, and ſinned in taking up ſuch a Concluſion as this, that thou ſhalt not ſee God, (the ſenſe of which I ſhall open when I come to our own tranſlation) therefore I adviſe thee to judge thy ſelf thoroughly, and humbly to acknowledge thy fault. This tranſlation is much inſiſted upon, and becauſe it hath a profitable ſenſe, I ſhall note two or three poynts from the latter part of the verſe, where it differs from ours, and then proceed to our own Tranſlation. *Job* being charged with ſin for ſaying, that *he ſhould not ſee God*, is here adviſed to judge himſelf, *Judge thy ſelf, and look to, or truſt in him.*

Etiam (in hac parte) quòd dixiſti te non contemplaturum eum; Judica (te) coram eo, & expecta eum. Piſc:

Aliqui דין pro nomine exponunt, Judicium alii pro דוּן verbo imperativi modi; Judica. Merc:

Hence Note;

It is our duty to judge our ſelves.

And 'tis a great Goſpel duty: The Apoſtle gives it in plain words, (1 *Cor.* 11. 31.) *If we would judge our ſelves, we ſhould not be judged of the Lord.* We are very apt to judge one another, but very backward to judge our ſelves. It is a great work to erect a Tribunal (as I may ſay) in our own Souls and Conſciences, to ſit in Judgement upon our ſelves; which that we may do, we muſt do theſe three things. Firſt, we muſt ſend Summons to our ſelves, we muſt cite our ſelves to our own Tribunal; for alwayes before Judgement, Summons muſt go out and be ſent to the party offending: Here we are to ſend Summons to our ſelves, that is, to call together all the powers of our ſouls to appear in this Judgement, and anſwer what is or may be alledged againſt us. And when we have Summoned our ſelves, then ſecondly, we are to

examine, search, and try our selves, (*Lam.* 3. 41.) *Let us search and try our wayes, and turn again unto the Lord.* Thirdly, having tryed and examined our selves, before we can come to Judgement (that Judgement which is here intended) we must humble our selves under a Conviction of our own vileness and sinfulness, whether of our nature or of our actions, whether of our state or of our way; for whereas there are two parts of Judgement, Absolution and Condemnation, we can never come to that part of Judgement, the judging of our selves, as persons worthy to be condemned by the Lord for our sins, unless we are first convinced of our sins. Now when we have summoned, examined, and convicted our selves, then we are ready to judge our selves, to judge our selves even with the judgement of condemnation, respecting what we have done, yet we should do it (with hopes of absolution) acting our faith upon the free grace and mercy of God through the satisfaction which Jesus Christ hath made for us.

Again, The scope of this counsel, or the reason why *Elihu* adviseth *Job* to judge himself, was to shew, that he had rashly judged of the wayes of God, because he had not duly judged himself.

Hence Note;

Self-judging, or judging our own doings, will preserve us from rash judging the doings and dealings of God with us.

We shall never think God deals harshly, or rigorously with us, if we do but enter into and pass a right judgement upon our own souls. As they that judge themselves shall not be judged of the Lord, (1 *Cor.* 11. 31.) so, they that judge themselves will never judge the Lord; no, they will acquit and justifie the Lord under all his proceedings, even in his sorest and severest ones. Thus did *Ezra* in reference to those great and unparalel'd sufferings of the *Jewes* in the Babylonian warr and captivity, (*Chap.* 9. 13.) *Thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve.* And so did *Daniel* (Chap. 9. 7.) *O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day.*

Further, *Elihu* concluded *Job* very much affected with, or highly conceited of himself, because he pleaded his own innoceney or integrity so much, and was so desirous to come to a hearing, and have his matter tryed before God; and therefore saith he, *Judge thy self.* Hence

Hence Note;

Self-judging will keep us from proud or high thoughts of our selves, of our own wayes or works, how good soever they are.

Suppose our wayes and our works pure and good, as *Jobs* indeed were for the maine, (he was a man of the highest elevation in holiness and of greatest integrity) yet if we would thoroughly examine and judge our selves, consider our short comings in duty, our sinnings against duty, and the sins that cleave to our best duties, we should find our very innocency to be guilty, and our righteousness to be unrighteous; and surely such a discovery would lay us very low in our own thoughts, and go very far towards the subduing of that pride of our hearts, which often ariseth from the contemplation of our own wel-doing.

Lastly, Consider this counsel was given *Job* (according to this translation) with respect to that which follows; *Judge thy self, and trust in or wait for him.*

Hence Note;

We are never fit to trust, nor to wait upon God in any of his providences, till we judge our selves; or, *Judging of our selves will dispose and prepare our hearts for trusting and resting upon the power, goodness and mercy of God.*

The more we judge and humble our selves, the readier hath God declared himself to help us in our extremities, (1 *Pet.* 5 6.) we also are then the readier to trust and wait on him, both because we then see more clearly what need we have to trust on him for help, and may have the more assurance of his help, while we trust him.

I shall now proceed to our own translation, which fairly accommodates the scope of *Elihu's* dealing with *Job* in this place.

Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him.

Elihu had reprehended two of *Jobs* sayings before in this Chapter; here he reprehends a third; *Although thou sayest this, thou shalt not see him*; although thou sayest it, either secretly in thy heart, (the fool saith in his heart there is no God) or although thou sayest it with thy mouth, and hast openly declared thy despayre of seeing him. Some passages in the discourse of *Job* do

do more than intimate and imply, that he had said, *he should not see God.* And we may conceive that *Elihu* aimeth at that passage specially (*Chap.* 23. 8, 9.) where *Job* seems to say this thing; *Behold, I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.* Now, *Elihu* gives answer in this 14th verse, shewing, that although God would not give him a present hearing upon his importunate call for it, yet he might rest assured, that God would do him justice, and therefore adviseth him quietly to rest upon him. *Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, or canst not see him, yet Judgement is before him, therefore trust thou in him.* In that 23d Chapter, *Job* made a sad complaint, that though he much solicited and desired to see God (in what sense I shall open presently) yet he could not be admitted, he could not find him, nor come near him; *I* (saith he) *cannot perceive him, I cannot behold him, I cannot see him*; we have all these words negatively expressed there; as here, *Although thou sayest thou shalt not see,* (or *contemplate*) *him.*

There is a two-fold sight of God; First, immediate, or in himself; and thus God is seen only by himself, and of himself, to all others he is invisible, *No eye hath seen him, nor can see him,* (1 *Tim.* 6. 16.) The Lord told *Moses, No man can see my face and live*; that is, no man can see me immediately, no man can have any ocular sight of me, as we see those things that are before us; *God is a Spirit,* and therefore invisible. *Job* doth not complain, (in this sense) that he could not see God, for he knew God was not to be seen, nor did he wait for any such corporal view or sight or presence of God. Secondly, There is a mediate sight of God, and that by a three-fold means; First, in or by his Word; for that is one glass wherein we behold him. Secondly, there is a sight of God in his Works, they are another glass wherein we see and behold him; and those works are two-fold; First, the works of Creation, *in them we may see* or contemplate God all the world over, in his power, wisdome, and goodness, (*Rom.* 1. 19, 20.) Secondly, his works of providence, ordering and disposing all the motions of the creatures, as himself pleaseth, how much soever any of their motions are displeasing unto him. Thus we may see God in his works, that is, it is seen by his works, not only

only that he is, but what he is, or that he is Eternal and Infinite, that he is Most Wise and Omnipotent, that he can do all things, or that nothing is too hard for him, he having brought all things out of nothing. There is a Third Medium or Means by which we may see God, and that is, *His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,* (2 Cor. 4. 6.) *The light of the knowledge of the Glory of God shineth to us in the face of Jesus Christ*; that is, in the person of Christ, God-Man, we may behold the glorious Grace of God unto poor sinful lost man. All the beams of Divine Love are collected in, and issue forth from the face of Jesus Christ. He that would see how good, how gracious, how merciful the Lord is to sinners, let him by an eye of Faith, or spiritual Contemplation look Christ in the face, and there he shall find the expresse Characters of all that Glory. By these Means, or mediately in all these wayes, God may be seen, and is seen by his People. This threefold sight of God, is the sight of Faith; it is by Faith that we see him in his Word; it is by Faith that we see him in his Works; it is by Faith that we see him in his Son. Thus we are to understand that of the Apostle concerning *Moses,* (Heb. 11. 27.) *He endured, as seeing him that is invisible.*

We may also distinguish of this sight of God two ways; there is a sight of God first in grace, which is, though a true and real, yet an imperfect sight, of which the Apostle speaks (1 *Cor.* 13. 12.) *Now we see as in a glasse, darkly.* Secondly, There is a seeing of God in glory, which is there called *A seeing of him face to face:* Of that sight Christ speaks (*Math.* 5 8.) *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* As they now see him in the dispensations of his Grace here, so they shall see him in the givings forth, or manifestations of his Glory to them hereafter. Now when *Job* complaineth, or *Elihu* brings him in complaining, *That he should not see God,* we are not to understand it, as if he despaired of ever seeing God in Glory, or had concluded in his own breast, that he should never see him in his ways of Grace, or professed that at present he had no sight at all of God by faith; for, though I conceive *Jobs* sight of God by faith, or in the actings of his Grace, at that time was very low and dim, yet some sight he had of him by faith, enough I am sure to preserve and keep him from making any such negative Conclusion against himself, that he should not see God in Glory. But that which he chiefly intendeth

יעף *Intendit oculos. Verbum videri ejusdem est, pro astare coram aliquo cum magna cum fiducia, & animo destituto, ed eluso capite ad interrogantem respicere, temere, judicem securos intueri, ide dicitur & is audeat. Gold.*

tendeth, is, that he feared he should not come to see him in such a day and way of tryal, as he before desired in the 23d Chapter, (*vers.* 8, 9.) or that God would never manifest himself so clearly in his Providences and dealings about his cate in this world, as might acquit him, and bring the matter in question to a full state, that all might take notice of his wronged integrity. *Job* was under a great Cloud at that time, and feared that God had covered himself with a Cloud also, (as the Church bemoaned her self, *Lam.* 3. 44.) and therefore said, *I shall not see him*; I shall not see him as a Judge acquitting me, and giving sentence for me. Some conceive, that the Hebrew word rendred *Seeing*, refers to a person brought before a Judge, for the tryal of his Cause, and standing before him, not as a guilty Malefactor, with a heavy heart, and a down-look, but as a man conscious of his own innocency, with much honest boldnesse, and well tempered confidence. The words following intimate such a sence of that word, *Although thou sayest, thou shalt not see him*, (that is, be brought to tryal,) *yet Judgement is before him*, he will certainly try thee. This I take to be the most proper Explication of these words, *Although thou sayest, thou shalt not see him.*

Job spake this as the worst of his case, as that which was a greater grief and misery to him, than all his other miseries and griefs, that God would not set him in a clear light before others, or that himself should not have a clear light from God concerning his condition.

Hence Note;

The sight of God, or Gods discoverie of himself in any dark case, is very sweet to an upright and gracious soul.

Job had begged for this once and again, though possibly, as *Elihu* would here convince him, he was something too forward in it, and did not enough reflect upon himself; yet as he had often desired it, so doubtlesse it was exceeding much upon his heart, that he might have a clear discovery from God. The Apostle, in somewhat a like case, in being aspersed in his Ministry, saith, *We are made manifest unto God*, (2 Cor. 5. 11.) It pleased him that he was manifest unto God: But when God is pleased to manifest himself unto a Soul, how pleasing is that? When we can say, now we see God, we see him clearing up our way, clearing up our integrity,

tegrity, clearing up our state, how satisfying is it! And as it is most sweet and satisfying to see God clearing up our state to our own consciences, so it is exceeding sweet to see him clearing up our actions to the eye of the world; as the Apostle spake in the same place, *We are manifest unto God, and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.* As if he had said, we hope, God hath discovered us to you, and your consciences do also attest with us and for us what we are. *Light is sweet* (the light of the air, saith *Solomon*) *and it is pleasant to behold the Sun*, the Sun in the firmament; how much more sweet is the light of divine favour, as also of our own faithfulness, shining into our hearts, and upon our wayes, so that we are able to say, now we see the Lord graciously rolling away our reproach, owning us, and taking our part before and against all the opposing contradicting world!

Secondly, Note;

A godly man may lose the sight and present apprehension of God, as owning of him, and taking care of him.

It is so often as to our spiritual estate, and it may be so, as to our outward state; hence those many complainings which we find in the *Psalmes*, and those many deprecations, as to the hiding of Gods face; *David* would faine have kept sight of God, O how he desired to see him, to behold him! yet many times he did not, neither as to the assurance of his spiritual interest, nor as to the comforts of his outward condition, (*Psal.* 13. 1.) (*Psal.* 27. 9.) (*Psal.* 30. 7.) As God sometimes sheweth himself in a kind of cloud or darknes, in fire and tempest, which is very terrible to the soul; so he at other times discovers himself only a little, or gives but a glimpse of himself clearly, to stir up further desires of seeing him, and to make us weary of all we see in this world: in these cases we may be said not to see God when we see him. Many godly men are in such a dark condition, that they think God hideth his face from them in displeasure, when indeed he doth not, but only tryeth them, to see what is in them, and whether they will obey him in hope and patience, and keep close to him in holy walkings, even when he seemeth to depart from them, and withdraw his presence.

Saepe deus offendit faciem suam, sed non ita ut cupiant homines, ideoq; non videant se videre, ut ita dicam. Coc:

Thirdly, Observe;

Good men are apt sometimes to make over-sad conclusions against themselves,

As evil men are apt to make over-good conclusions for themselves, they doubt not but they shall see and enjoy God. O what presumptuous thoughts have men, and what peremptory, though groundless, conclusions do they make for themselves upon false and rotten premises! they will say, they know God, and are known of God, they see God, and enjoy God, when they know not the meaning, much less have tasted the comfort of knowing God, or of being known by him, of seeing God, or of enjoying him. These mysterious experiences are not every man's meat, nor every man's matters, who makes title to the knowledge of God. The Apostle saith expresly, (1 *John* 2. 4.) *He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his Commandements, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* And again, (*Chap.* 3. 6.) *Whosoever sinneth* (that is, loves and lives in sin) *hath not seen him, neither known him.* Yet how many are there, far from keeping the Commandements of God, far from a holy life, yea far from a holy state, so far from such a holy life, as of which it may be said in a Gospel sense, that they sin not, that indeed they do nothing else but sin! yet these are apt to conclude, they see God, they see him by faith, they know him, they doubt not but he is their God. Now as many carnal men are apt to make false conclusions to themselves of an interest in God, when there is no such matter, kindling a fire, and compassing themselves about with their own sparks, as the Prophet speaks, (*Isa.* 50. 11.) that is, with vaine conceits of their own blowing up, that all is well with them; when all that they, who do so, shall have at Gods hand, is, *they shall lie down in sorrow.* So on the other side, godly men often times make sad conclusions against themselves, they say (as *Job* in the Text) *they shall not see him*; who though (as was shewed in opening the Text) he did not conclude against his sight of God by grace, or that he had no sight of him by faith, yet he had not a comfortable sight as to his present enjoyment, and he doubted whether ever he should in this world. *Jonah* made such a conclusion (*Chap.* 2. 4.) *Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight.* As *Hezekiah* said in his sickness, (*Isa.* 38. 11.) *I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the Land of the living*; that is, I shall die, and shall no more go into the house of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple, which was the one thing, even the only thing (in this life) which *David* desired and resolved to seek after, (*Psal.* 27. 4.) So many, while they live, are apt to make such conclusions, they shall see God no more, they shall not see him as long as they live, they are afraid they shall never have comfort more, nor peace more, while they are in this world, while they are on this side heaven; yet whether ever they shall come to see him in heaven, is their greatest, their saddest, their most heart-disquieting and heart-breaking doubt and feare. And indeed as we cannot see God, untill he gives us eyes, so we cannot believe we shall see him, untill he gives us hearts. Many times his dealings, both as to outward terrible providences, and inward terrors, are so dark, that we can see nothing but darkness, nor say any thing but as *Job* is here charged to say, that *we shall not see him.* Yea, God doth often hide himself from his people on purpose to try whether they will trust him and wait upon him under such withdrawings, for salvation, whether temporal or eternal, (*Isal.* 45. 15.) *Thou art a God that hidest thy self, O God of Israel, the Saviour:* Let us therefore take heed of saying, he will be for ever hidden, or that we shall never see, nor behold him as a Saviour; say not it is so dark with us, that as now we see no light, so our night shall never have a morning.

Fourthly, From these words, *Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him,* Note,

A good man is apt to give his heart and tongue too much liberty.

We should watch our hearts, to keep out or cast out vaine thoughts, we should strangle distrustful and unbelieving thoughts in the very birth, that so our tongues may never bring them forth, nor publish them to the offence of others. *Thou hast said, thou shalt not see him.* But when our unbridled tongues have run at randome, and spoken what is not right, yet God will do what is right, as the next words assure us.

Yet Judgment is before him.

These words plainly intimate, that *Jobs* scope, when he said he should not *see God,* was, that he should not see him as a Judge clearing up his cause, or appearing to vindicate the wrong done him, and to do him right. As if *Elihu* had said, Whatever thy opinion is concerning God, that he will never appear in thy cause to do thee right, yet know this (O *Job*) *Judgement is before him,*

and therefore I advise thee, be thou better perswaded both of his presence with thee, and of his providence over thee. The word rendred *Judgement*, is that from which one of the Patriarks had his name, and it is a great elegancy, (*Gen.* 49. 16.) *Dan shall Judge his people.* The proper name *Dan*, is the same with the Verb which follows, *shall Judge.*

When *Judgement is said to be before the Lord*, it may be taken three wayes, (so we find it in the Scripture) First, we read there of Judgement as it is opposed to mercy. These terrible and dreadful Judgements of God are every where spoken of. Secondly, Judgement is opposed to imprudence and want of understanding or discretion; Judgement is a wise and clear sight or apprehension of things; as we say such a one is a Judicious man, or a man of a great Judgement. Thirdly, Judgement is opposed to injustice or to unrighteousness; thus we do judgement and justice. Many have a great stock of judgement or understanding, who yet will do little judgment, that is, little justice, they have a right understanding of things, yet will do little or nothing right. Here, when it is said, *Judgment is before him*, we are to understand it in the two latter senses; for though it be a great truth that judgment as opposed to mercy, is before the Lord, *And he shall have judgement without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy*, though (as the Apostle adds in the same place *James* 2. 13.) *Mercy rejoyceth* (or *glorieth*) *against Judgement*; The Lord hath judgements, all manner of judgements about him, yet that notion of judgement doth not belong to this place, but the two latter. *Judgement is before him*; that is, he is a God of infinite understanding and wisdome, he seeth every thing to the utmost, he goes to the bottome of every mans case, yea, to the very bottome of every mans heart; he sees every action quite through, and every person: And as he knows the truth of every mans cause and case, so he will do every man right, according to the merit of his cause and case. *Justice and Judgement are the habitation of his throne, while clouds and darkness are round about him*, (Psal. 97 2.) that is, though present dispensations are obscure (as in *Jobs* case) yet both the procedure and dealings of God, as also the issue or determination which he gives in every matter, is just and righteous to all men, as well as gracious and comfortable to good and upright-hearted men. Thus, Judgement, or this judgement is alwayes *before him*, that

that is, he hath a clear sight of it, and he is ready to do it.

Hence Note, First,

God hath a right and clear apprehension of all persons and actions;

His understanding is infinite. *The Lord is* (as *Hannah* spake in her Thanksgiving-Song, 1 *Sam.* 2. 3.) *a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed*; That is, he knoweth them exactly, to a grain, as we do the weight of those things which we have laid in an even Balance. It is required of Judges (in that advice which *Jethro* gave to *Moses*, Exod. 18. 21.) That they should be *able men*, that is, (not so much men of able purses, as) of able parts, men of able judgement, and of more than common understanding, even such as were able to look through every mans Cause that came before them. Such is the ability of the Lords understanding to the full, he is Omniscient, *He is light, and in him is no darkness at all.* And as in him there is no darkness, so nothing is dark to him; the most intricate and knotty Case, the most ravel'd and vext Cause that ever was, is plain and evident before his eyes, with whom we have to do, and who hath to do with us. *Judgement is before him*; neither is there any Judgement before any other in comparison of him; God hath so much light, that Men and Angels are to him but darkness; God seeth so much, that all others may be said not to see, or to be stark blind; even those Judges may be called blind, who are not blinded, we may say they have no eyes, whose eyes are not put out with gifts, compared with God. How blind then are those Judges, who are blinded? and whose eyes are put out, either by prejudice or passion, by hopes or fears! it cannot be, but Judgement must be before God, because as he clearly sees, and fully understands whatsoever comes before him, so nothing can divert or biass him from doing every man right, according to his sight and understanding. *Judgement is before him.*

Hence Note, Secondly,

God will do right to every man, as sure as he knows the right of every man.

There are many who know what is right, who know whose Cause is right, yet will not do right. But as sure as God knows every mans right, so certainly he will do him right. *Abraham* pleaded

pleaded thus with God, *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* (Gen. 18. 25.) Certainly, he will do right, he cannot but do right; *Judgement is before him.* The Scripture is express, *He will reward every man* (and award to every man) *according to his works.* Every man shall have as he is; for (as the Apostle speaks, 1 Cor. 4. 6.) *He shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart; and then shall every man have praise of God*; that is, every man shall have it, who is fit for it; every man shall have praise, who is (as we say) praise-worthy, how much soever he hath been dispraised, slurr'd in his credit, unworthily dealt with, and accused in this world. God will not hold, or detain the truth of men in unrighteousnesse, though men hold both the truth of God, and the truth of men (the truth of their Causes) in unrighteousnesse. *Judgement is before the Lord.*

Further, That Particle which we render *yet*, gives us this Note.

God is never a whit the lesse Righteous, because it doth not appear to us that he is so.

Although thou sayest, thou shalt not see him, yet Judgement is before him. The wayes of God are often secret, but none of them are unjust; *Judgement is before him*, even then, when we think it is fartheſt off from him. Therefore, if we will give God the glory of governing the world, and of ordering all our personal conditions, we must not measure him by the things we see, or which appear; for we cannot see the measure of his Judgement by what appears, that which appears to us is not his Judgement, something else is his judgement, and he in the close will make his judgement clear to all men, he will make it appear that judgment is his, though what his judgement is doth not appear. The mis-apprehensions, or mis-constructions of men do not at all retard or stop the righteousnesse of God, as the Apostle speaks in another case (*Rom.* 3. 3.) *Shall the unbelief of man make the Faith of God* (that is, the Faithfulnesse of God) *of none effect? God forbid*; God will be Faithful and True, though all the world be Unbelievers and Lyars. Now, as the unbelief of man cannot make the Faithfulnesse of God of none effect; so our not believing that Judgement proceeds, or our saying it is delayed, does not

not at all take off God from righteousnesse in doing Judgement; he is doing Judgement righteously, whatever apprehensions men have of his doings. *Judgement is before him*;

Therefore trust thou in him.

Elihu according to the first reading of the former words, exhorts *Job* to Repentance; *Judge thy self*; and here he exhorts him to Faith, *Trust thou in him. Judgement is before him, therefore trust thou in him*, or *wait and hope in him*; for seeing God is a Just and Righteous Judge, he will not neglect or slight the Cause of any of his People; therefore they have all the reason in the world to trust in him, and wait upon him. It is unbelief which makes haste, Faith is content to wait and tarry.

The Original word hath several significations. First, More general, to *grieve*, or *be in pain and trouble.* Secondly, In special, to bring forth, or the pain of a woman in travel to bring forth; there is much pain in that travel. Thus some translate here, *Wait for him*, as a woman in travel waits for deliverance. Thirdly, As it signifies to have pain, and to have that pain in bringing forth children, so to attend, to wait, to stay quietly, and expect. *Rest in the Lord* (saith *David*, Psal. 37. 7.) *and wait patiently for him.* We may give the reason of this signification from that allusion. The woman though she be in pain, yet she patiently bears it, because she hath hope a man shall be born into the world, (*John* 16. 21.) A woman in that pain, hath not only patience but comfort under it, because she hopes a child shall shortly be born, who will recompence all her sorrows, in bearing and bringing him forth into the world. That's the force of this word, *Trust in him.* Thou art in pain, in trouble, in travel for the present, yet thou shalt have a blessed deliverance, thou shalt certainly find, that it is not in vain to trust upon God. Thus *Elihu* wiseth *Job* to such a patience as a woman in travel with child hath, who bears her pains comfortably, being refreshed and supported with an assurance, and fore-sense of that joy which she shall have, being once delivered. *Trust thou in him.* I have in some other places of this Book, met with this Point of trusting in God, *Job* said in the 13th Chapter of this Book, (*vers.* 15.) *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*; And therefore I shall not stay to open that general duty, or the exercise of that Grace, which here *Elihu* exhorts

חול a חולל *Notat* 1. *Dolere.* 2. *Parturire.* 3. *Manere, Perseverare.* 4. *Sperare. Forte per metaphoram, quia anima sperans futur. in gaudium cum dolore parturit.* Coc.

exhorts *Job* to, *Trusting in, or waiting upon God.* Only from the Connexion,

Note;

First, *It is our duty to wait and trust upon God;*

And 'tis such a duty as will keep us close to all other duties; a mind staid on God, is a mind fit to move about any good work whatsoever, which God calleth us unto.

Secondly, Put all together, *Thou sayest, thou shalt not see him,* (thou art doubtful whether ever things will mend,) *yet Judgement is before him, therefore trust.*

Hence Note;

When things are not clear to us, when we have no light about what God is doing, or what he will do, yet it is our duty to trust and wait upon God.

We must wait upon God, and trust in him, though we do not see him, yea, though we cannot see him, *for Judgement is before him.* That of the Prophet (*Isa.* 50. 10.) is a clear proof of this duty, (and some expound this Scripture specially respecting outward dark providences, as others of inward darkness, or darkness of spirit) *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voyce of his servants, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light* (as *Job* saith here, *I shall not see him*) What shall a poor benighted soul do in that case? The answer or advice followeth) *Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.* How dark soever our condition is, yet it is our duty to trust upon God; and if once we are enabled to give God the glory due to his name, in confessing, that *Judgement is before him,* we shall readily trust upon him, to order all things for us, though all things seem out of order, even to amazement; though we see heaven and earth, as it were, confounded, yet we shall readily trust upon him, because we believe, that even then *Judgement is before him.* How soon can he turn our darkness into light, who in the first Creation, when all lay together in a confused heap, and darkness over all, brought forth light and set all in order? The Lord can command light out of darkness, good out of evil, order out of confusion, and he can do all this easily, and at an instant; therefore whatever the appearances of things are, let not us judge according to appearance, but hope and

and wait, and stick to what God hath promised. Though providences appear cross to promises and prophesies, yet they never frustrate either. Let us also be sure to stick to the commandements of God, for we may rest assured, God will stick to his promises. To keep Commandements is our work, to keep promises is Gods work; though we fayle much in our work, God will not fayle at all in his work: To believe this, is the highest and truest work of faith. But if we are faithful in our work, the keeping of Commandements, we have a further evidence, that God will be faithful in his work, the keeping or fulfilling of promises, (a great part, the most spiritual part of Gods fulfilling promises, being his enabling of us to keep Commandements) and then we shall be able to say, not only in faith, but from experience, *that Judgement is before him.* And untill we come to this conclusion of faith in dark times, when we cannot see him, the soul never sits down in rest. Nothing fixes the soul but trust in God; we are unquier, yea we boyle with unquietness, and tosse as the angry Sea with the windes, till we trust fully upon God, upon his wisdome and power, upon his goodness and faithfulness, and can say, let him do as seems good in his eyes; we know he is and will be *good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.* When we can once stay our minds on God, we are quiet; but when we must bring God to our mind, and must have God go our pace, or come at our time, and work in our way, (none of which he will do, what a do soever we make to have it so) O how restless and troubled are we, even like the troubled Sea when it cannot rest! And O how much of this restless trouble discovers it self in the minds of many (that I say not the most of) men, and all because they cannot trust God when they do not see him, or because when they do not see him (which was *Jobs* fayling) they say, *they shall not see him.* If matters come not to pass according to their platforme, and model, or hit not the dates and dayes, the times and seasons which they have fixt in their unscriptural Kalender, or by a mistake of the Scripture Kalendar, they are ready to say, *they shall not see him,* their hopes are as the giving up of the ghost, that is, they give all for lost, and past recovery. *Many trust God* (as they do some men) *no farther than they see him*; they are the worst and coursest sort of men, whom we trust no otherwise. How dishonourable then, how infinitely below God is such a trust?

Elihu would have *Job* (and so should we) trust God, though he could not see him, and said he should not. *Thou hast said, thou shalt not see him, yet trust in him.*

Lastly, From the illative particle, *therefore* (that is, *because Judgement is before him*) *trust thou in him,*

Note hence;

The consideration of the Righteousness and Justice of God, is a mighty argument to provoke us to trust him, and wait upon him.

Trust is not every bodyes due; some (as we speak proverbially) are to be trusted no farther than a man can throw a Milstone, that is, they are not to be trusted at all: Trust (I say) is not every bodyes due: but to trust God is every bodyes duty, yea and interest too, for he is cloathed as much with righteousness and justice, as he is with strength and power. Will you not trust an honest man, will you not trust a wise man? We can come to a height of confidence in man sometimes, if we think him a man of judgement and wisdome, of honesty and faithfulness, we can trust all we have in such a mans hand; how much more should we say to God, seeing *Judgement is before him, therefore will we trust in him!* We have an eminent Scripture, urging this duty upon this ground, (*Isa.* 30. 18.) *The Lord is a God of Judgement* (Judgement is there taken in the same notion as here in the Text, he is a wise and a just God, the Lord is a God of judgement, what followeth) *Blessed are they that wait for him.* There can be nothing said, more urging, more encouraging to wait and trust on God, to do us right, then this, *He is a God of Judgement, a righteous God, Judgement is before him.*

Thus far of the good counsel which *Elihu* gave *Job* in this his dark and deserted state; and counsel it was worthy to be embraced with both armes, and with an open breast; and that *Job* had need of it, he shews in the next words, while he tells *Job* and us, it was not so with him yet, as appeared by the sad hand of God upon him, and his own distemper under it.

JOB,

JOB, Chap. 35. Vers. 15, 16.

15. *But now because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger, yet he knoweth it not in great extremity.*

16. *Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain: he multiplieth words without knowledge.*

IN the close of the former verse, *Elihu* called upon and exhorted *Job* to a patient reliance, and trust on God, *Judgement is before him, therefore trust thou in him*; here in the 15th verse he shews, that, the reason why God visited him so sorely, and yet continued his visitation upon him, was because he did not, as he ought, patienrly trust in, and rely upon him.

There are several readings of this verse, but I shall only mention one, besides our own, and having stayed a little about that, go on to the explication of the Text, as it lyes in order before us. Some render thus;

But know now, his anger hath visited thee but a little, (Hebr: *nothing*) *neither hath he made any great inquisition.* The sense of the verse, according to this rendring, riseth thus; As if *Elihu* had said, *God hath dealt with thee O Job, far better than thou hast dealt with him*, or *then thou hast cause to expect; he hath not laid his hand so heavy upon thee, as thy iniquity hath deserved, and yet thou complainest much of his severity; whereas indeed he hath not strictly inquired into the multitude of thy sins, which if he had done, he would certainly have brought upon thee, a greater multitude of afflictions, he would have afflicted thee much more: Thou art too well used to complain thus*; That's the summe of this rendring, which the learned Authors of it make fairly out from the Original, to whom I refer the Reader, and shall only offer two notes from it, for instruction.

Nunc autem scito quod paululum te visitavit ira ipsius, neque inquisivit multum admodum. Merc: *Scito perexiguum esse, quo te deus iratus plectit, nisi leviter in te inquirere maluisset.* Bez:

First, *The sorest afflictions that fall upon sinners in this life are little or nothing to what God might lay upon them.*

There is no condition here actually so bad, but possibly it might be worse; though the darkness of night be upon us, yet it may be

 darker

darker with us; God can make a night so dark, that the former darkness may be called light; God can add so much bitterness to that which is very bitter, so much weight to that burden of affliction, which is already very heavy, that the former bitter may be called sweet, and that former weight of affliction, light. Are any poor, sick, or pained, God can make them poorer, sicker, and so encrease their paine, that former poverty, sickness, paine, may go for riches, health, and ease. And as present sufferings of one kind or other, are but little to what they may be, so they are but little to what we have deserved they should be: The least mercy is more than we deserve, and the greatest affliction is less than we deserve. *He hath visited thee little or nothing*, (so the word is) saith *Elihu*, according to this reading of the Text. The Lord hath not only not visited thee too much, O *Job*, but he may be said, not to have visited thee at all, or the All of thy visitation is nothing to that which the Lord could have brought upon thee. *David* gives a general assertion near this concerning the dealings of the Lord, in his angry dispensations, (*Psal.* 103. 10.) *He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities*; that is, our sins and our iniquities might have born out the Justice of God in laying heavier evils and troubles upon us, than yet he hath done. Sinners never have their full punishment till they come to hell. As the sweetest joyes and strongest consolations which the godly find and feel on earth, are only tasts and first-fruits of that they shall have in heaven; so all the sorrows and sufferings of the wicked in this world, are but tasts, light touches and beginnings of sorrow, compared with the pains and sorrows of the next world, where sinners shall be payd their wages in full.

Et nunc quia nihil est quod visitavit ira ejus. Drus.

Secondly, From the latter part of the verse thus translated, *Neither hath he made any great inquisition*; that is, he hath not taken strict knowledge of thy sins, though a multitude, though even past number; though there be abundance of them, and they abounding in sinfulness, yet he hath not made any great inquisition after them;

Utrumq; visitandi & recensendi vel cognoscendi verbum in hoc loco judicis vel magistratus in peccatores animadversionem inquisitionem punitioni conjunctum importat. Boldi

Hence Note;

The Lord doth not severely mark the sins of his people, no not the multitude nor magnitude of their sins, to punish them.

(*Psal.*

(*Psal.* 130. 3.) *If thou Lord shouldest mark iniquity*, implying that the Lord doth not mark (in the sense here intended) *if thou shouldest mark iniquity*) *O Lord, who shall stand?* The word in that *Psalm* rendred to *mark*, notes, first, to watch, or to observe with exactest diligence, and is therefore in the Noun rendred a *watch Tower*, upon which a man is placed to take observation of all things that are done, and of all persons that passe by, or approach and come neer. A Watch-man placed upon a high-Tower, is bound industriously and critically to observe all Passengers, and passages, all that his eye can reach: So saith the Text, If thou shouldest mark as a Watch-man, and eye with rigour every thing that passeth from us, *Who could stand?* That is, make good his Cause in the day of his judgement and tryal before thee? Secondly, The word signifieth to keep in mind, to lay up, to have, as it were, a store and stock, a memorial or record, of such and such things by us. In that notion it is said (*Gen.* 37. 11.) *Josephs Brethren envied him, but his Father observed the saying*; he marked what *Joseph* spake about his Dreams, he laid it up, and did not let it passe away as a Dream, or as a vision of the night: Thus in the *Psalm*, *If the Lord should mark iniquity*, if he should treasure up our sins in his memory, and keep them by him, *who were able to stand when accounted with?* The Lord in a way of grace, seeth as if he saw not, and winks at us oftentimes when we do amiss, as he is said to have done at those times, the times of ignorance, when not only many things, but even every thing was done amiss, and out of order, in the dark *Gentile* world, before the approach of Gospel light, (*Acts* 17. 30.) *And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent.* That is, the Lord took little notice of those untaught times, in comparison of that strict notice which he will take of these times; concerning which, he gave command to his Apostles, *Go and teach all Nations*; and yet the strictest notice which he takes of our sins in these times, is but little to what he might.

שמר

So much from that Translation of the Text; our own runs thus.

Vers. 15. *But now because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger; yet he knoweth it not in great extremity.*

We

We must expound this Verse in Connexion with the latter part of the former.

But now because it is not so.

What is not so? what is missing? what is wanting? What had *Job* done amiss? or what had he miss to do? *Elihu* seems to answer, he hath miss the doing of that duty to which he was moved in the close of the fore-going Verse, expressed in those words, *Trust thou in him*, or *wait upon him*: *But now because it is not so*; that is, Because thou dost not put forth such acts of holy confidence, and patient waiting upon God as thou oughtest, and as I admonished thee to do, therefore God is engaged, and even compelled to treat thee thus roughly and severely, *He hath visited in his anger*. As if he had said, Though thou hast professed a trust in God, yet thou dost not trust in him fully, as becomes thee, yea, thou seemest sometimes (as a man forlorn) to cast up thy hopes; therefore, because thou dost not trust in him, because it is not so as I have exhorted and directed thee, the Lord hath visited in anger. Mr. *Broughton* renders, *But now for missing, his anger doth visit. For missing*; that is, for missing of duty, or for not acting up to duty, for not trusting fully in the Lord, the Lord hath visited thee in his anger. This sense is obvious and commodious according to our reading. *But now because it is not so,*

Homo tentatur et in examen vocatur ut proferatur ejus spes et patientia; quamdoquidem igitur illa non exstat, invasit ira ejus, quæ odit, et amolitur peccatum, etiam in iis quos diligit, et salvos vult maxime. Coc.

He hath visited in his anger, or strictly, *his anger hath visited*;

That is, God hath heavily afflicted thee. God is far from all passion and perturbation of mind, only he is said to be angry, or to visit in his anger, when he doth that which anger produceth among men; when he casts down and punisheth, when he lays his hand sorely upon the Creature, then he is said to be angry, then *His anger hath visited*. The word notes quick breathing in the Nostrils; anger appears, or vents it self there; as it is said of *Paul*, when *Saul* (Acts 9. 1.) *And Saul yet breathing out threatnings, and slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord, went unto the High Priest*. You might see anger, as it were foam, yea flame out of his mouth, and evaporate at his nostrils. Thus saith *Elihu*, *Because it is not so, his anger*

Hath

Hath visited.

To *visit*, is properly to go to, and see any person whom we respect and love; thus we visit friends in civility and courtesie. Secondly, To *visit* is an act of pity and mercy; and thus we *visit* the sick, the widdow, and the fatherlesse (*James* 1.27.) *Pure Religion, and undefiled before God, and the Father, is to visit the fatherlesse and widows in their affliction*; that is, to go to them in pity, either for the supply of their wants by our purse, or for the comforting of their hearts by our counsel. Thirdly, We *visit* in care, as well as in kindnesse, that is, when we go to our Families or Flocks, or places of charge, wheresoever they are, and see that, or whether, all things are well and right with them, or well, and rightly done towards them, according to the rules that such persons under our charge ought to act, and live by: Thus in Colledges and Hospitals, there is a visitation of care, to make enquiry of persons in trust, about persons and things under their trust.

To the Point in hand; there is a twofold visitation of God.

First, He visits in love and mercy, (*Ruth.* 1.6.) *Then she* (that is *Naomi*) *arose with her Daughter in Law, that she might return from the Countrey of Moab, for she had heard in the Countrey of Moab, how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread*. That is, God had shewed them kindnesse and mercy in relieving them from that devouring famine. Again, (*Gen.* 21. 6.) *And the Lord visited Sarah, as he had said*; that is, he gave her the promised mercy of a Son. Once more, (*Luke* 1. 68.) *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited, and redeemed his People*; and that's a blessed visitation indeed, which brings redemption. Thus the Scripture often speaks of Gods visitation in mercy.

Secondly, There is a visitation of God in anger, wrath and judgement. The Law saith (*Exod.* 20. 4, 5.) *Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven Image*, &c. *Thou shalt not bow down thy self to them, nor serve them*; *for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me*: That is punishing the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, these Children continuing in their Fathers ways, to do sinfully; such Children

פקד אפו *Ira ejus visitavit.*

We muſt expound this Verſe in Connexion with the latter part of the former.

But now becauſe it is not ſo.

What is not ſo? what is miſſing? what is wanting? What had *Job* done amiſs? or what had he miſt to do? *Elihu* ſeems to anſwer, he hath miſt the doing of that duty to which he was moved in the cloſe of the fore-going Verſe, expreſſed in thoſe words, *Truſt thou in him*, or *wait upon him*: *But now becauſe it is not ſo*; that is, Becauſe thou doſt not put forth ſuch acts of holy confidence, and patient waiting upon God as thou oughteſt, and as I admoniſhed thee to do, therefore God is engaged, and even compelled to treat thee thus roughly and ſeverely, *He hath viſited in his anger*. As if he had ſaid, Though thou haſt profeſſed a truſt in God, yet thou doſt not truſt in him fully, as becomes thee, yea, thou ſeemeſt ſometimes (as a man forlorn) to caſt up thy hopes; therefore, becauſe thou doſt not truſt in him, becauſe it is not ſo as I have exhorted and directed thee, the Lord hath viſited in anger. Mr. *Braughton* renders, *But now for miſſing, his anger doth viſit. For miſſing*; that is, for miſſing of duty, or for not acting up to duty, for not truſting fully in the Lord, the Lord hath viſited thee in his anger. This ſenſe is obvious and commodious according to our reading. *But now becauſe it is not ſo,*

Homo tentatur et in examen vocatur ut proferatur ejus ſpes et patientia; quamloquidem igitur illa non exstat, invaſit ira ejus, quæ odit, et amolitur peccatum, etiam in iis quos diligit, et ſalvos vult maxime. Coc.

He hath viſited in his anger, or ſtrictly, *his anger hath viſited*;

That is, God hath heavily afflicted thee. God is far from all paſſion and perturbation of mind, only he is ſaid to be angry, or to viſit in his anger, when he doth that which anger produceth among men; when he caſts down and puniſheth, when he lays his hand ſorely upon the Creature, then he is ſaid to be angry, then *His anger hath viſited*. The word notes quick breathing in the Noſtrils; anger appears, or vents it ſelf there; as it is ſaid of *Paul*, when *Saul* (Acts 9. 1.) *And Saul yet breathing out threatnings, and ſlaughter againſt the Diſciples of the Lord, went unto the High Prieſt*. You might ſee anger, as it were foam, yea flame out of his mouth, and evaporate at his noſtrils. Thus ſaith *Elihu*, *Becauſe it is not ſo, his anger*

פקד אפו *Ira ejus viſitavit.*

Hath

Hath viſited.

To *viſit*, is properly to go to, and ſee any perſon whom we reſpect and love; thus we viſit friends in civility and courteſie. Secondly, To *viſit* is an act of pity and mercy; and thus we *viſit* the ſick, the widdow, and the fatherleſſe (*James* 1.27.) *Pure Religion, and undefiled before God, and the Father, is to viſit the fatherleſſe and widows in their affliction*; that is, to go to them in pity, either for the ſupply of their wants by our purſe, or for the comforting of their hearts by our counſel. Thirdly, We *viſit* in care, as well as in kindneſſe, that is, when we go to our Families or Flocks, or places of charge, whereſoever they are, and ſee that, or whether, all things are well and right with them, or well, and rightly done towards them, according to the rules that ſuch perſons under our charge ought to act, and live by: Thus in Colledges and Hoſpitals, there is a viſitation of care, to make enquiry of perſons in truſt, about perſons and things under their truſt.

To the Point in hand; there is a twofold viſitation of God.

Firſt, He viſits in love and mercy, (*Ruth.* 1.6.) *Then ſhe* (that is *Naomi*) *aroſe with her Daughter in Law, that ſhe might return from the Countrey of Moab, for ſhe had heard in the Countrey of Moab, how that the Lord had viſited his people in giving them bread.* That is, God had ſhewed them kindneſſe and mercy in relieving them from that devouring famine. Again, (*Gen.* 21. 6.) *And the Lord viſited Sarah, as he had ſaid*; that is, he gave her the promiſed mercy of a Son. Once more, (*Luke* 1. 68.) *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, for he hath viſited, and redeemed his People*; and that's a bleſſed viſitation indeed, which brings redemption. Thus the Scripture often ſpeaks of Gods viſitation in mercy.

Secondly, There is a viſitation of God in anger, wrath and judgement. The Law ſaith (*Exod.* 20. 4, 5.) *Thou ſhalt not make to thy ſelf any graven Image*, &c. *Thou ſhalt not bow down thy ſelf to them, nor ſerve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, viſiting the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me*: That is puniſhing the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, theſe Children continuing in their Fathers ways, to do ſinfully; ſuch Children

dren as take up the evil examples, or tread in the bad steps of their fore-Fathers, shall suffer for it. The Prophet at once upbraided the impudent *Jews*, and threatned them in this Language, (*Jer.* 6. 15.) *Were they ashamed when they had committed abominations? nay, they were not ashamed, neither could they blush; therefore they shall fall among them that fall at the time that I visit them, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.* Again, (*Isa.* 26. 14.) *Therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them.* There is a visitation for destruction, that's a sad visitation. In this sense we read of a time of visitation (*Jer.* 8. 12. *Jer.* 10. 15.) We read of days of visitation, (*Hosea* 9. 7.) *The dayes of visitation are come, the dayes of recompence are come.* We read also of a year of visitation, (*Jer.* 23. 12.) *For I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the Lord.* As also (*Chap.* 11. 23.) *I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, even the year of their visitation.* This is the visitation here spoken of; it is a time, a day, a year of sore visitation with thee, O *Job*. *Because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger.*

Hence Note, First,

God expects the work of Faith and Patience, when his afflicting hand is upon us.

Faith hath much work to do at all times, but most in times of affliction. There is also a use of two sorts of patience in our best dayes; the patience of labouring in Gods work, and the patience of waiting for the reward of our work, after all our labours: But in sad dayes the Lord expects we should exercise both patience in suffering, and in waiting for deliverance out of all our sufferings; then 'tis that both Faith and Patience, trusting and waiting must have their perfect work.

Secondly Note;

When the Lord doth not find or see, as he expects, the work of Faith and Patience in a time of affliction, he will afflict more and more until he finds or works it.

This is it which *Elihu* saith in the Text, *Because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger.* *Job* was sorely afflicted before, but now he is visited in anger, because he did not manifest such trust in God as he expected in that condition. As when the wicked repent

repent not of their sins under the punishing hand of God, he will punish them more and more, even seven times more for their sins, (*Levit.* 26. 41.) So when good men act not their Graces, believe not, trust not under the afflicting hand of God, he usually afflicts them more and more, gives them soarer stripes, and layeth yet heavier burdens on them. When God misseth what he look'd for, we may quickly feel what we looked not for. Mr. *Braughtons* Translation speaks the Point fully, *But now for missing, his anger doth visit.* Man seldome misseth trouble from God, when God misseth duty from man; and 'tis a mercy that he doth not: 'tis mans mercy when God minds him of his deficiencies in duty, though by a smart visiting rod. Thus the Lord spake of *Davids* Seed, (and 'tis to be understood of all the Seed of Christ, whom *David* typed, *Psal.* 89.) *If his children forsake my Law,* (v. 30, 31.) *Then* (vers. 32.) *will I visit their transgressions with the Rod,* &c. How true this charge of *Elihu* was, as to *Jobs* omission of duty, I shall not stay to enquire; only this we know, *Job* had professed trust in God, yet because it was mingled with so much complaint, with so many unbelieving expostulations, *Elihu* might say the Lord missed the patience, trust and confidence, which he expected from *Job*. Doubtlesse, more of all these should have appeared in him, and they should have appeared more in that time of affliction. There are two things which God looketh for, and aims at in the time of our affliction; first, the mortifying of corruptions, that they work no more, at least no more so strongly as they have done; secondly, The stirring up, and acting of our Graces, that they may be more working, and work more strongly than ever they have done. Where the Lord sees not these effects of affliction, that our sins grow lesse, and our graces more, that we complain lesse, and trust or believe more, we are like to be afflicted more, and he will discover his anger more. *Because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger.* And thence

Note, Thirdly;

Distrust or impatience under the afflicting hand of God, or our not trusting God in our worst condition patiently, is a very provoking sin.

We provoke the Lord to visit us in his anger, when we do not

trust in his mercy. Our not trusting God must needs provoke him to anger; for when we do not trust him, we question him; distrust or unbelief questions all that God is, and all that God hath promised, it questions his Truth, and his Faithfulnesse, his Power, his Mercy, and his Goodnesse; all these, which are the glory of God, and in all which the sons of men ought to glorifie him, these are all questioned and darkned, when we put not forth acts of trust and reliance upon God, in times of greatest affliction and extremity. Is it not then a provoking sin, I say not to with-draw trust from God, and give it to an arm of flesh, but not to put out fresh and full acts of trust upon God, let our affliction or extremity be what it will! The Children of *Israel* were in great extremity at the Red Sea, a mighty Army pursuing them at the heels to destroy them, and mighty waters being before them, ready to swallow them up; in these straits (whilest they should have done their utmost to get, and assure God to be their Friend) the Psalmist tells us, *They provoked him*, (Psal. 106, 7.) But wherein lay their provocation? that Scripture saith, *They remembred not the multitude of his mercies*: The former mercies of the Lord did not strengthen their trust in present troubles; that was one provocation. And as former mercies did not strengthen their trust, so the present trouble drew out their distrust, as another Scripture assures, reporting their behaviour in it (*Exod.* 14.11.) *And they said to Moses, Because there were no Graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to dye in the Wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?* What were these fearful fore-casts, these amazing bodements of an unavoidable (as they apprehended) ruine, but the overflowings of unbelief, or distrust in God; and this was another provocation. Former mercies are forgotten, yea eaten up by unbelief, as the seaven lean Kine in *Pharaohs* dream, eat up the fat ones, and present difficulties are aggravated by unbelief, as if all the power of God could not remove and overcome them. And will not the Lord (think you) visit in anger for such a sin as this?

Again, As *Elihu* doth not say barely, he hath visited, but *he hath visited in his anger*, or *his anger hath visited*, so consider, who was it that was thus visited in anger? It was *Job*, a Godly man, a man perfect and upright.

Hence

Hence note, Fourthly;

God visits or afflicts, even his own people, his elect, and choicest servants, with fatherly anger, when they displease and provoke him.

We find the Scripture speaking expresly of the anger of God towards the best of his servants, even towards a *Moses*, (as himself made confession, *Deuter.* 1. 37.) when they displease him; *Also the Lord was angry with me for your sakes, saying, thou also shalt not go in thither. Moses* was a most meek man, the meekest man upon the face of the earth, nor was he an inferior in any other grace, yet the Lord was angry with him, and angry with him upon that special occasion, his unbeliefe, (*Numb.* 20. 12.) *And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, because ye believe me not, to sanctifie me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore* &c. We read of the Lords anger breaking out against *Aaron* for another sin, (*Numb.* 12. 9.) *The anger of the Lord was kindled against them*, that is, against *Aaron and Miriam, because they had spoken against Moses*, (vers. 1. 8.) *Aaron* was the High Priest, and as he was high in office, so eminent in grace; and doubtless *Miriam* was a very gracious woman, yet the Lord was not only angry with them, but exceeding angry; his anger waxed hot against them and kindled, when they forgot their duty to *Moses*, and remembred not their distance with reverence. *Solomon* in his prayer at the Dedication of the Temple, speaks of the people of God collectively; *If they sin against thee, and thou be angry with them.* The Lord is not only angry with the world, but angry with his Church, not only angry with *Babylon*, but with *Jerusalem*. And as *Solomon* spake that of the whole Nation of the *Jewes*, supposing they might fall under the Lords anger all together as a body; so he did experience it sadly in his own person, (1 *Kings* 9. 11.) *And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice.* Wise *Solomon* departed from God through an evil heart of unbelief and vanity, after the Lord had come and appeared to him more than once in grace and favour; and the bitter effects or fruits of that departure, appeared to him shortly after, *the Lord* (saith that Scripture) *was angry with Solomon*; and the sequel of his History tells us, there went out very hot displea-

pleasure against him. As these Scriptures are, a proof of the Lords anger kindling against his people when they sin; so we find the Church represented praising the Lord for quenching the fire of his anger, (*Isa.* 12. 1.) *And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me.* When we turn from God, his anger is turned against us, and when we turn to God, his anger is turned away from us. When the Lord is angry, what can comfort us, but the turning away of his anger? And by the very act of turning away his anger, he comforts us, though all the world be angry with us.

But some may say, How doth the Lord, who is said to love his people with an everlasting love, visit them in anger? To clear that, we may distinguish of anger.

First, There is correcting anger: Secondly, there is consuming or destroying anger. Destroying anger is inconsistent with everlasting love, but not correcting anger: correcting anger may be very grievous, therefore the Prophet deprecates it, (*Jer.* 10. 24.) *Correct me, O Lord, in Judgement, not in thy anger.* The Lord doth often exercise (that is as often as there is cause, and we give him cause too often to exercise) a smart and severe anger towards his own people; but his consuming and destroying anger is the lot and portion of the wicked; *If his anger be kindled but a little* (namely against his enemies) *blessed are they that trust in him*; blessed are they that believe, when that anger of the Lord breaks forth against unbelievers. Or we may state it thus;

First, God is angry with sinful persons; thus he is angry with the world, or with wicked men.

Secondly, God is angry with persons for sinning, (there is a great difference between these two; anger with sinful persons, and anger with persons for their sin, or for sinning) and thus he is angry with his own people, even with the godly when they sin, though not for every sin.

Further, We may distinguish of anger thus; There is anger mixed with a desire of taking revenge upon those that we are angry with, a revengeful anger: thus the Lord is angry only with the wicked. Of this anger *Moses* speaks, having described a presumptuous sinner, who believes not only without a word, but against the word, who *when he heareth the word of the curse, blesseth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness unto thirst; then the anger of the Lord and his jealousie shall smoak against that man,* &c. (*Deut.* 29. 19, 20.) Read more of this revengeful anger of the Lord, (*Deut.* 32. 22, 41, 42.) Secondly, there is anger with a desire to reforme, and reclaime those that we are angry with: Thus a loving and indulgent father is angry with his child, when he hath committed a fault; he is angry, not with an anger of desire to revenge, but with an anger of desire to reforme. And thus the Lord is angry with his own people, with his choicest servants, and dearest children, when they forget their duty and play the wantons.

Lastly, We may distinguish of anger thus; There is First, a temporary anger: As there is a temporary faith in hypocrites, so (we may say) there is a temporary anger in God against the faithful when offending; that is, he is angry with them for a while, for a season: *Sing unto the Lord, O ye Saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his Holiness,* (saith *David*, Psal. 30, 4.) But why doth he call them to singing? we have the reason of it given at the 5th verse, *For his anger endureth but a moment*; he speaks there of the Lords anger against his Saints and peculiar people: while they indeed have cause to mourn for provoking the Lord to anger, they may also sing, both because his anger endureth but for a moment, that is, because (if that be all) it endureth not at all, (a moment is of no endurance) as also because *in his favour is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.* Once more, hear the Prophets report of the Lords anger, (*Micah* 7. 18.) *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage; he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.* God doth not *retain his anger for ever*; that is, not long; yea, that *not for ever*, is but a little while, a moment, and that but a small moment, as the Prophet *Isaiah* spake, (*Chap.* 54. 7.) As if he had said, The Lords anger is not retained so long, as if it should be alwayes retained; his anger towards you is soon blown over, and gone, upon the matter (like a moment) as soon as come. Such is the anger which God discovers towards his own people.

Secondly, There is an anger for ever, an abiding wrath, a fire of anger which never goeth out, nor can be put out, which is kindled

led in the breast of God against ungodly men, and against them only as living and dying without repentance, in their ungodliness. *Job* a godly man, was visited in the former, not in this latter anger.

Yet for the fuller answer to this query, as it concerns *Jobs* case, I conceive *Elihu* speaks with the highest and hardest towards him. For though it be a truth, that the Lord discovers, as was shewed before, a fatherly anger towards his children when he chasteneth them for their sin, yet he chasteneth them more, or rather, in love than in anger; *As whom he loves, he rebukes and chastens,* (*Rev.* 3. 19.) so he chastens and rebukes them in love. And as for *Job*, whom God dearly loved, it is cleare from the first and second Chapters of this Book, that God afflicted him not for any special sin, or way of sinning, but for his tryal, and to set him up as a great pattern of patience to all succeeding generations. Or we may say that God afflicted *Job*, not because of any provocation which he had given him, but at Satans instance and provocation, (*Chap.* 2. 3.) All that can be said for *Elihu's* help in saying that God visited him in anger, is only this, That though *Job* had not provoked the Lord to visit him in anger when he began to visit him, yet some impatient and over-bold speeches of his, or that liberty of speech which he took in expostulating and almost contesting with God about his afflictions, might cause him to visit him in such anger as hath been set forth in answer to the query. *And now because it is not so*, because the Lord misseth those acts of grace, trust and patience, which thy case calleth thee to the exercise of, *He hath visited in his anger*; and what followeth?

Yet he knoweth it not in great extremity.

Et nonadvertit ad auctum valde. i.e, Nihil discrevit (sc: deus) quod non visitaret, etiamsi eare visitatus magis doleret. Nam necesse erat visitatum ita tan-

Elihu seems to have spoken this turning himself to the company, and complaining to them of *Jobs* insensibleness, *Yet he knoweth not*, &c.

Some refer this clause of the verse to God also, *He hath visited in his anger, and taketh no notice of the great increase, or of that which is greatly increased*; that is, God hath spared nothing from his visitation, although the party visited were never so much grieved or damnified in the loss and spoyle of his all. There was a necessity (saith this Author) that he who was visited should be so toucht as to be sensible of the stroake; which could not be, unless the

gi ut sentiret: quod fieri non poterat, si non & pleraq; & charissima quæq; bona adimerentur. Coct.

the greatest of his encrease, and those things which were most dear to him were taken away from him, or he were stript naked and bereaved of them.

Our translation refers these words to the person visited, as if he, though reduced to the greatest extremities, yet was not sensible of it, or took no notice of what he suffered, or was done to him; *Yet he knoweth it not in great extremity.* Who knoweth not? the Antecedent to *he* is *Job*, according to this translation; *because he knoweth not.* But what did not *Job* know? First, He knew not the dealings of God with him, to submit to them as he should. Secondly, He knew not that there was such a miss or deficiency in the acting of his graces, he perceived not how weak a soul he had in that weak body; his trust, his faith, did not act, *and yet he knew it not*, or took no notice of his fayling in those duties. Thirdly, *He hath visited in his anger, yet he knoweth it not*, that is, he knoweth not the anger of God, who visiteth him. To know may be taken three wayes.

First, For the bare notion or apprehension of a thing; thus certainly *Job* did know that he was visited, for he spake often and enough of it.

Secondly, To know, is to consider, to lay a thing to heart, (*Isa.* 1. 3.) *My people doth not know, Israel doth not consider*, the latter part is exegetical, and expounds the former, *My people doth not know*, that is, *doth not consider.* So (*Hos.* 2. 8.) *She did not know that I gave her corn*, &c. (*Psal.* 90. 11.) *Who knoweth the power of thy anger?* that is, who considers it? who weighes what the anger of the Lord is? we have sweet thoughts, about the mercy, and love, and goodness of God, yet 'tis little, very little of any of these that we know. The love of God, which we delight to know, passeth knowledge, (*Eph.* 3. 19.) But for the anger of God, which is so dreadful, we seldome set our selves to the study of it; none can know it comprehensively, and few seek it labour to know it industriously, considerately.

Thirdly, To know, is to be under a due sense of what we know: We may know a thing, and consider it, yet not have a feeling of it. I conceive we are to understand the word *know* here, in these two latter senses; *He knoweth it not*; that is, he doth not consider, nor hath he a due sense, either of the defect of his own graces, that his faith acts not as it ought, that his trust performes

not

not its part as it should; nor doth he know the anger of God in this visitation; that is, he knoweth not, nor considereth, the scope and meaning of God in this angry dispensation. *Yet he knoweth it not*

In great extremity.

רוב פש *est Multitudo, multum passim occurrit in* Targ: *Interdum in Hebraismo.* Merc.

The word signifieth any kind of encrease (*Mal.* 4. 2.) *They shall go forth, and grow up as the Calves of the Stall.* So 'tis used (*Jer.* 50. 11.) *Because ye are grown fat*, we put in the Margin, *big or corpulent.* (Lev. 13. 5.) *If the Plague* (of Leprosie he means) *encrease*, grow great, and spread it self, *then* &c. *Jobs* affliction was a great one at first, and it grew greater afterwards: He was *in great extremity*, or in extremities; of what? in great extremity, First, of loss and poverty in his Estate; Secondly, of pain and torment in his Body; Thirdly, of grief and anguish in his Soul: In all these he suffered, and suffered extreamly, or in great extremity. Mr. *Broughton* renders, *Because Job knoweth not this great plenty*, namely, of sorrows, which compass him about.

This was the censure of *Elihu* upon *Job*, and *Job* had given *Elihu* too much ground for this censure. Though *Jobs* Faith and trust were strongly at work sometimes, yet they did not always continue their work in the same degree or strength: and while he often complained in his extremity, that God dealt with him as with an enemy, he did not well consider what that anger of God was, in which he visited him, during the time of that great extremity: *Yet he knoweth it not in great extremity.*

As *this not knowing* is referred to his weakness in acting his Graces; *now, it is not so*, yet he knoweth it not;

Note;

A godly man is not always sensible of his defects and failings in grace.

As some have little or no Grace, who yet conceit they have much (*Rev.* 3. 17.) *Thou sayest, I am rich, and encreased in goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and naked.* So others who have grace, yea, much grace in the habit (as *Job* had;) may be very insensible how little it acts, yea they may suppose it acts much, when the actings of it are intermitted or extreamly suppressed by passion and

and corruption? They may think their Faith strong, or that they trust fully in God, they may think themselves patient and humble under the hand of God, and yet be greatly defective in the working of all these Graces; I mean not such a deficiency only, as is common to all believers (the best come short in the exercise of grace) but some great deficiency may be, and yet the soul not sensible of it. As some are over-sensible of their failings, complaining that they have no Faith, no Patience, when they not only have Faith and Patience, as to their Being, but as to their working also, and possibly, working well. (It is a different work of the Spirit, to act and stir up Grace in us, and to discover to us the actings and stirrings of Grace) Now as some godly men act Grace, and know it not, so in others that are godly Grace acts not, and they know it not; Faith is down, and they know it not; they can bear little or nothing patiently, yet they take no notice of it. Thus the words of *Elihu* concerning *Job*; *he knoweth it not*, referr to the former part of the verse, *It is not so*; that is, his Graces act not, yet he takes no notice of it, but thinks Faith and Patience, with other Graces, work well enough.

Secondly, As *not knowing* refers to the visitation of God, *He hath visited him in his anger, and he knoweth it not* (yea, though) *in great extremity*, though he have a very hard time of it.

Hence Note, First,

A good man may not only be visited, but extreamly visited by the hand of God;

He may be under many extremities at once; extreamly visited in Body, extreamly in Mind, extreamly in his Relations, extreamly in his Name, extreamly in all his worldly concernments. As there is no outward evil, for the matter, so none for the degree, but a good man may be in it. Let us be moderate in judging those, who are in the extreamest extreamities of suffering.

Secondly, Note;

Some good men, or good men sometimes under very great afflictions, are not sensible of the hand of the Lord upon them.

As a good man may receive many mercies, and yet not observe (at present) how, or from whom he receives them, so he may be under angry visitations or dispensations in great extremity, and

not mind the dealing of God with him in it, nor what he intendeth by it; yea, he may complain of the burthen, and cry out under the pressure, yet not know it at that time for his own good, for his humbling or purging. The Prophet saith concerning *Ephraim*, (*Hos.* 7. 9.) *Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not*: That is, Enemies have swallowed up, or taken away that wealth, those riches, they have subdued those Armies, those Forces, which he looked upon, and boasted of, as his strength; they have broken him quite with Warrs & Invations, yet *Ephraim* knew it not: and not only so, but as it followeth, *Yea, Gray hairs are here and there upon him*; that is, he hath many Symptomes or Signs of ruine and destruction, *yet he knoweth it not*. Grief of heart for great changes in our Estate, change the hair; many grow gray with sorrow. So that, when 'tis said gray hairs are upon him, 'tis an allusion taken from the Body Natural to the Body Politick; for as when the natural Body of a man hath gray hairs appearing, or (as *Solomon* allegorizeth, *Eccl.* 12. 5.) *when the Almond Tree flourisheth*, it is an argument that old Age and infirmities are coming upon him (Gray hairs tell us that Death and the Grave are not farr off, they signifie some decay of nature.) Now as the natural Body hath its gray hairs, so a Politick Body, the body of a State hath its gray hairs too; that is, something may come upon a State, which sheweth that it is declining and waxing old, that it is ready to break, and go to the Grave. I shall not stay to enquire what are the gray hairs of a Nation; I only bring that Scripture, to prove that many are insensible of the hand of God; *he visiteth in his anger, yet* man, possibly a good man, *knoweth it not*, as *Ephraim* knew not of his gray hairs.

But did not *Ephraim* know his affliction? or did not *Job* know his? what is it to know, or who may be said to know an affliction?

I answer, they only know their afflictions, or that God is visiting in his anger,

First, who labour to find out the cause of Gods visitation. If we feel the afflicting hand of God upon us, and enquire not, whence is this? why is it so? what hath moved or provoked the Lord to this manner of proceeding with us? If, I say, we make not such enquiries, we are visited in anger, and know it not. And therefore in that case, the Prophet *Jeremy* exhorts the afflicted, captivated Church

Church of the *Jewes* in *Babylon*, *to search and try their wayes*, (Lam. 3. 41.) that is, to consider why it was so with them, what was the cause of their captivity. Till we sit down and make diligent search, why we are visited, why any affliction or calamity is upon our Persons and Families, or upon the Kingdomes and Nations respectively where we live, we know neither the day of our visitation, nor what our visitation is. Then only we know Gods visitation, when we are studying the causes of it; *To know a thing is to know it in the causes of it.* *Scire est per causas scire.*

Secondly, They may be said to know the visitation of the Lord, that are studying, as the cause which they have given, so the ends and purposes which God hath in visiting them; for how much soever we find and see the causes of an affliction, yet till our hearts are drawn out to answer the ends of it, we do not truly know it.

But you will say, what are the usual ends which the Lord hath in afflicting his people?

I answer, First, to turn them from sin; Secondly, to unglew and wean them from the world; Thirdly, that they may live nearer to, or more with him; Fourthly, that they may live more unto him, or (which takes in both the latter ends) that they may enjoy him more while they live, & honour him more with their lives. Now (I say) till we are upon this kind of study, both of the causes of our visitation, and the ends of it, & beg that we may both remove those causes, & comply with or answer those ends, we may be said not to know the visitation of the Lord, though it be, and we are, in great extremity. And if this be to know the visitation of God, surely many are perishing and sinking under the hand of his visitation, who yet know it not. How many are there, who neither endeavour to search out the causes, nor to fulfil the ends for which the Lord visiteth them in his anger! I conceive this assertion, or supposition at least of *Elihu*'s concerning *Job*, both as to his not trusting God in his affliction, and not knowing his visitation, was, though in part true, and occasion'd on *Jobs* part, yet over-harsh and severe: nor was the inference which he made from it in the next verse, less severe and harsh.

Vers. 16. *Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain, he multiplyeth words without knowledge.*

Here's the conclusion of *Elihu*'s third Discourse with *Job*:

Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain.

Some connect this verse with the former, according to the first reading of it, before mentioned, that giving a reason of this; But now his anger (or he in anger) hath visited thee but a little, or nothing, *&c. Therefore thou, O Job, openest thy mouth in vain.* As if he had said, *Because the anger of God hath not punished Job sharply enough, nor in proportion to the multitude and greatness of his sins, therefore he speaks thus boldly and rashly.*

Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain.

To open the mouth is a Periphrasis of speaking; As if he had said, therefore *Job* speaks in vain. To speak in vain, or to use vain words, is to speak to little or no purpose, as I have had occasion to shew upon other places of this Book (*Chap.* 15. 2. *Chap.* 16. 3.) and therefore shall not stay upon it here. *Job* was no vain speaker, he used to speak words of weight, words of soberness and truth, yet was overborn by passion, though not to speak vain words in the matter, yet to speak or open his mouth in vain.

Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain. Consider the Inference, *therefore*, that is, First, Because he doth not humble himself in a patient dependance upon God; Secondly, because he doth not, as he ought, duly take notice of the purpose of God in visiting him; Thirdly, because he seems more solicitous and zealous in defending his own right and credit, than the honour and righteousness of God: for all these Reasons *he openeth his mouth in vain*, that is, he loseth his labour, in all this discourse, and might (as we speak proverbially) have saved his breath to cool his broth: *Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain.* Taking the Charge which *Elihu* brought against *Job* in the former verse, to be well grounded and true, we may Note,

All our complaints to, and debates with God, as also all our Apologies for our selves in affliction, are fruitless and successless, till we give Glory to God, and answer his purposes, in laying his hand upon us.

Oratio vana sensu atq; sapientiæ inops.

Unless our hearts bow to God, he will not bow his ear to us. We only fill the air with words, we are but sounding brass and tinkling

tinkling Cimbals in all we say to God, unless we do what God saith. *Elihu* supposing *Job*'s spirit yet unsubdued or not wrought and brought into a right frame under his affliction, might well say, *he openeth his mouth in vaine*; and as it followeth to the same effect in the close of this verse and Chapter,

tantum sonitu verborum & querimoniarum clamosa.

He multiplieth words without knowledge.

Here is another hard censure, upon this good, this holy, and wise man *Job*. Some Expositers fall heavy upon *Elihu*, as charging *Job* too far; he spake (say they) many things that were right, but not rightly; he spake many things that were true, but he did not speak truly in fixing them upon *Job*; he spake all uprightly, but somewhat too rigorously: And indeed, if he had charged him so far, as to say, he had no knowledge at all, and had not opened his mouth at all to purpose, he had charged him beyond both truth and modesty. But *Elihu*, who was set up by God for this very end to humble *Job*, had ground to tell him, that as to some things, he had both *opened his mouth in vaine, and multiplied words without knowledge*; that is, he had spoken many words which seemed not to proceed from any sound or well-grounded knowledge; and I may give a four-fold ground of it.

First, Because he had not sufficiently attended and magnified the Soveraignty of God, in laying those afflictions upon him.

Secondly, Because he had not, as he ought, sate down quietly under the hand of God; but often called to know the cause, and that God would plainly tell him the reason, or give him an account why he suffered: Whereas he should have remembred, that as many of the judgements of God are unsearchable, and his wayes past finding out by man, so he hath reserved some of them as secrets in his own breast, and will no more give any man an account of them, than any man ought to desire an account of them.

Thirdly, Because he had not more considered his sin, or had not been so much in considering the greatness of his sin, as he had been in setting forth the greatness of his integrity. For though it were true which *Job* spake, *that his way was upright*, and though God had given testimony to his uprightness and integrity in all his wayes, yet he should not have insisted so much upon that poynt, which had so much affinity with self-boasting, though he intended it only for self clearing, or for the righting of himself. It had been

more

more becoming him to have been aggravating his sin, than setting forth his righteousnes; this was the poynt that *Elihu* struck at, that he had justified himself too much, and judged himself too little. Yea *Job* was convinced of this at last, *Once have I spoken, but I will speak no more*, that is, *of my own integrity*, or righteousnes.

Fourthly, He may be said to have multiplied words without knowledge, because he had spoken so much in the aggravation of his afflictions: 'Tis true, his afflictions were very great; yet *Elihu* censures him deservedly, because he took too much notice of them, complaining often and often, how heavy the hand of God was upon him, yea that God was an enemy to him; whereas he should rather have lookt upon the visitation of God, as light and easie, or (at least) as but little comparatively, to what the Lord was able to lay upon him, or what his sin might justifie God in laying upon him. *Elihu* having observed *Job* often and long striking upon that string, hightning his sufferings and troubles, had reason enough not only to call him off from it, but to check him for it. And therefore let us remember and be admonished, that in all our afflictions we should not so much set forth the greatnes of our suffering, as the greatnes of the mercy of God; we should look upon little mercies as great, (it shews an excellent spirit, when we heighten and greaten the mercy and goodnes of God, even in little things) but we should speak of, and look upon our greatest chastenings and afflictions as light, and little. *Job* sayled somewhat in all these things, and in some of them his saylings were great; and upon some of, if not upon all these grounds, I judge *Elihu* gave this judgement upon *Job*; *He openeth his mouth in vaine, and multiplieth words without knowledge.*

Inscitiam objicit quod pugnantia, saltem non satis inter se cohærentia conjunxit. Merl:

Job also yeilded himself thus faulty at last (*Chap.* 42. 3.) *Who is he* (there he speaks of himself in a third person, *Who is he*) *that hideth counsel without knowledge; therefore have I uttered that I understood not, things too wonderfull for me, which I knew not;*

I shall close my thoughts upon this Chapter, with minding the Reader: First, of *Elihu* his candednes towards *Job*, beyond what he found from his other friends; for *Elihu* chargeth *Job* here, only with vanity and inadvertency, not with any premeditated wicked-

wickednes or blasphemy, as *Eliphaz* had done, (*Chap.* 22. 13, 14.) Secondly, let me mind the Reader, of that liberty and plainnes of speech which *Elihu* used towards *Job*, in telling him of, and censuring him for his saylings; as also of that patience, meeknes, and equanimity, with which *Job* heard, received, and bare his sharpest censures, not replying one word in passion, nor so much as pleading the least excuse for his former passionateness, but taking all in good part, and, doubtless, improving all for his spirituall profit.

JOB,

JOB, Chap. 36. Verſ. 1, 2, 3, 4.

1. *Elihu alſo proceeded, and ſaid,*

2. *Suffer me a little, and I will ſhew thee, that I have yet to ſpeak on Gods behalf.*

3. *I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will aſcribe righteouſneſs to my Maker.*

4. *For truly my words ſhall not be falſe: he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.*

ELihu hath already made three addreſſes or ſpeeches to *Job*, and here he begins a fourth; this and the next Chapter are wholly ſpent in it, and are the iſſue of his whole diſcourſe with this ſorrowful man. In which we may conſider three parts.

Firſt, The Preface, or rather the Prefaces of his ſpeech.

Secondly, The Body or Subſtance of his Speech.

Thirdly, The Concluſion of it.

The Preface or Prefaces, the Introductions of this Diſcourſe of *Elihu* with *Job*, are contained in the foure verſes of this Text under hand.

The Body of his Diſcourſe, is begun at the fifth verſe inclusively, and continued to the 23d verſe of the next Chapter exclusively.

The Concluſion of all, is laid down in the two laſt verſes of the 37 Chapter.

In this copious Diſcourſe or long Oration, *Elihu* brings not any new aſſertion, or saying of *Job*, to be proved againſt him, nor doth he reprove *Job* for any new fault, but inſiſts upon the proof of what himſelf had aſſerted before, to ſhew that God is righteous, or to maintain the righteouſneſs of God; which he doth variouſly by looking through the various works of God, thoſe eſpecialy which are wrought on high, the Meteors of the aiery region, the raine,

raine, the ſnow, the lightening, and the thunder, in and by all which, report is made, as of the Wiſdome and Power, ſo of the Juſtice and Righteouſneſſe of God, who often declareth his mind to Mankind by thoſe Teachers, and proclaims by their mouths (as it were by ſound of Trumpet) how terrible he is, and will be to wilful and impenitent ſinners. That's the ſumme of his Argumentation, or the Scope of this his laſt undertaking with *Job*.

Verſ. 1. *Elihu alſo proceeded, and ſaid.*

This is the Pen-mans Preface, he makes the Connexion thus between the former and this diſcourſe; *Elihu alſo proceeded, and ſaid*: The Hebrew is, *Elihu added*, that is, to his former ſpeeches he added this. We render the word *he continued*, (Chap. 23. 1.) *Elihu alſo proceeded, or continued his ſpeech, and ſaid*; and what ſaid he? that begins at the next verſe.

Verſ. 2. *Suffer me a little, and I will ſhew thee, that I have yet to ſpeak on Gods behalf.*

Here begins *Elihu's* own Preface, the aim or tendency of which is to gain *Jobs* attention and ſubſcription to what he had to ſay, and he ſuggeſteth four Arguments or Motives in theſe three Verſes, to draw out the attention of *Job*, and likewiſe to gain his ſubmiſſion to what he ſhould lay before him.

כֹּה *Hoc ſignificatu chaldaicum eſt.* Druſ.

Firſt, He gives him an Argument from his intended brevity, I'le be ſhort, I mean not to be tedious, I will not tire thee, nor wear out thy patience with a long Diſcourſe: *Suffer me a little.*

His ſecond Argument is taken from the greatneſs of the Perſon, in whoſe name and behalf he was about to ſpeak: As if he had ſaid, Hear me, for it is not my own Cauſe, nor the Cauſe of any man that I have in hand, I ſpeak for God, *Suffer me a little, and I will ſhew thee, what I have yet to ſay for God.*

His third Argument is taken from the Authority in which he would ſpeak. Hear me diligently, for what I have to ſay, is not only for God, but from God; *I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and aſcribe righteouſneſſe to my Maker*, verſ. 3.

Nihil vulgare nihil non magnum dicam. Sanct.

Fourthly, Which is a neceſſary Conſequent of the former two, he would be heard, becauſe he reſolved (and hoped he ſhould make good that reſolution) to ſpeak the truth, and nothing but the truth; he offers this at the 4th Verſe, *For truly my words*

shall not be false, he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee. These are the four Arguments contained in this Preface, by which *Elihu* like a wise perswasive Orator, would draw on the attention of *Job* in hearing, and gain his approbation in receiving what he had to say. We may gather up the spirit and substance of all his Arguments into this one.

He is to be patiently heard, and readily assented to, who intends to speak but a little, and that little for God, and that little from God, and that in truth, and nothing but the truth.

But what I am now about to speak shall be but little, and that for God, and from God, and that in truth and nothing but the truth;

Therefore I am to be heard patiently, &c.

Suffer me a little.

Sta circa me paululum. Mont.

Some render, *stand*, or *stay about me*; that is, have patience a while, be not hasty. Impatient persons will be gone, they will not abide by it, to hear another out. Our Translation reaches this sence fully (according to the Idiom of our Language) *Suffer me a little.* The word which we render *little*, may referre either to the littleness or brevity of his Speech, or to the littleness of the space or time which he would spend in speaking; we joyn both here; as if he had said, *I will not speak much, and therefore I shall not take up much of your time.* The word is used by the Prophet with an addition, (*Isa.* 10. 25.) *Yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction*; that is, in the destruction of the enemies of my People. As if he had said, *My wrath shall not abide, it shall not last long, nor continue upon my People; and when I have done with them, it shall be turned upon their enemies and oppressors, the Assyrians, and towards them it shall not cease, till they are utterly overturned.* Take one instance more in the same Propher, nearer the businesse of the Text in *Job.* (*Isa.* 28. 10, 11.) *Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept, here a Little, and there a Little*, or *now a little, and then a little.* They shall not be overburdened, they shall have it by drops, by inches, by little and little, as they are able to bear; just as children and young Novices are taught, who cannot receive much at once, but now a letter and then a letter, now a rule, and then a rule.

זְעֵיר *Parum modicum est temporis et quantitatis discretæ.*

Possibly

Possibly *Elihu* perceived *Job* was not in a case to hear much, and therefore condescending to his weak condition by reason of his long sufferings, he saith to him, *Suffer me a little.*

Yet further, I conceive, when *Elihu* saith to *Job*, *Suffer me a little*, it may signifie one of these two things, or both of them. First, That *Job* had given him some interruption as he was speaking before. It is usual with us, if when a man is speaking, any interpose, to say, *Pray suffer me a while*, you shall have your liberty to object or reply what you please when I have done. Secondly, That he had shewed some distatisfaction with what *Elihu* had spoken fully out, or when he had done speaking, and therefore he desired that he might further cleer the matter, and speak out his mind, yet, at least, a little more, if it might be to his full satisfaction, and the removal of all his doubts. *Suffer me a little.*

Lay all these things together, and they will teach us a poynt of prudence, so to compose and compact what we have to say, that it may not be grievous or burthensome to those that hear us, especially not to those who (as *Job* was) are already grieved in mind, or body, or both. As the Spirit of God, lest the Faith and Patience of his People should fail in sufferings, telleth, yea assureth them, it is but a little while that they shall suffer; relief, or deliverance, and which is more, the Reliever, the Deliverer, is making hast towards them, (*Heb.* 10. 27.) *Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry*; as the Spirit of God (I say) doth thus nurse up the Faith of his People in suffering times: so we had need to nurse up the attentions of our Hearers at all times, but then chiefly when they are under any kind of suffering, and say, yet a little, suffer us a little, we will not burthen you much. There are two things of admirable use in speaking. First, Brevity. Secondly, Perspicuity. 'Tis true, that they that strive to be short, prove very obscure; yet doubtless, 'tis no very hard thing, in most matters, to joyn perspicuity with brevity, and to give a clear sense in a few words. And though it be a truth, That when we have said much of God, and of the things of God, we have said but little, yea, that when we have spoken our all, there remains infinitely more to be spoken, yet we should as much as may be, aim at brevity, especially where the Person spoken to is weak, and unfitted by bodily indispositions to hear much. *Suffer me a little,*

And I will shew thee, &c.

הדה *Amplam et fusiorem rei elucidationem et declarationem importat.* Bold.

That is, I will make all plain to thee, I will give thee a full declaration of my mind, and I hope of the truth, I will set all before thee, that so upon a review thou mayest the easier apprehend my sense, and give thy sentence about it. *Day unto day uttereth speech,* (saith *David*, Psal. 19. 2.) *and night unto night sheweth knowledge.* 'Tis this word, and it notes a very plain and evident manifestation of that which is offered to be known; the very night carrieth a light in it concerning the glory of God; *I will shew thee*

That I have yet to speak on Gods behalf.

Dativus verbis additus indicat honorem et cultum, loqui Deo, *est non solum pro Deo defendendo, sed etiam honorificando sermonem assumere.* Bold.

Some read *for God*, or *to* God; that is for the glory of God, or to the honour of God, in the clearing up of his righteousness, against those blemishes which thy speech, if not intentionally, yet consequentially, hath cast upon it; I will speak that which may both convince thee, and justifie God. The Original Text strictly is thus, *I will shew thee that there are yet words for God*; that is, I will make it appear that many things more may be said and proved in pursuance of this Poynt, for thy further humiliation under the mighty hand of God, and for the Lords vindication in all his dealings with thee. *I speak for God*: Nor was this a meer pretence, or a vain boast, as I find some Expositers (I conceive very causelessly) charging *Elihu*, as if here he published a zeal to speak for God, that he might gain applause, or draw a reverence upon himself, in what he had to speak. Some ('tis granted) have cryed up the Name of God, when they closely aimed at their own: But doubtless, *Elihu* was honest and plain hearted, when he said, that what he had to say was for God; as he pretended, so he was really for God; *I have yet to speak on Gods behalf.*

Quia sæpe arrogantes sibi sentiunt silentii reverentiam non deberi, Domini non nunquam potentiam, de quo quasi loquuntur insinuant, &c. Greg. in Loc.

Hence Observe, First;

It is a mans honour, as well as his duty, to be an Advocate for God.

As it is mans comfort, his choicest comfort, that God hath provided an Advocate for him, that he hath found out one to speak to himself in our behalf, namely, Jesus Christ; so it is both the duty and honour of man, to be an Advocate for God.

For

For if, First, it be a great honour to know God, and to have God made known to us; *He hath not dealt so with any Nation* (as he dealt with the *Jews*, in giving them the knowledge of his mind) *and as for his Judgements they have not known them,* (Psal. 147. 20.)

Secondly, If it be a greater honour to believe, and obey according to what we know, then

Thirdly, When we know, when we believe and obey, our greatest honour of all is to plead for, and stand up in Gods behalf, to undertake (being called) the defence of his truth and of his wayes, to *contend earnestly for the Faith, once* (by God) *delivered to the Saints,* which is indeed the only good contention. *Paul* saith (*Phil.* 1. 17.) *I am set for the defence of the Gospel. Paul* was a Champion ready to cope and buckle with all comers for Christ or the Gospel; and therefore at the 20th verse of the same Chapter, he saith, the great thing he lookt after was, *That Jesus Christ might be magnified in his body, whether by life, or by death.* There are three wayes whereby we appear as Advocates on Gods behalf; First, By saying, or arguing; Secondly, By doing or practising; Thirdly, By enduring and suffering; and by all Christ is *magnified in our body*; the two former wayes, by life, the latter by death, or by that which bears the Image of it. There's nothing needs a fuller measure of defence for God, than the Truth of God; and we never stand up so fully on Gods behalf, as when we stand for his Truth, though our selves fall. To speak and do on Gods behalf, is most for our own behoof, though we get but small fees or wages, yea though we lose our all in this world for such speaking and doing. I could wish there were not too much cause of complaint, that God hath not many to speak on his behalf, and that Christ Jesus, our great, our only Advocate with God, hath few Advocates among men. When God as it were calls to us, *Who is on my side? who?* Truly there are but few that will appear for him, that is, for Truth, for Holiness, for holy Worship; few appear for these things when differences arise about them. The corrupt part of the world in any Age will not, and the better part are not so free as they ought, to speak and appear (in such Cases) on Gods behalf. *The world* (saith St. *John* in the *Revelation*) *wondred after the Beast*; & he cannot want Advocates, who hath so many Admirers. But as the Admirers, so the Advocates

of

of the Lamb are not many, they are only a sealed, a selected Company. We can be very warm in speaking in our own Cause, and on our own behalf; but how cold and dead-hearted are we when we come to speak in the behalf of God! what a sad withdrawing is there from that duty! God stands up often on the behalf of his People, and owns them in their need, yet few own God, or the Truth of God, when there is most need. Remember, as it is our honour, so our duty to speak on Gods behalf; and they will come to a bad reckoning at last both for their doings and speakings, for the work both of hand and tongue, who have done and spoken much in their own behalf, and little or nothing on Gods.

Again, As *Elihu* makes this an Argument to provoke *Job* to hear him patiently,

Note,

They that speak for God, ought to have audience.

It is an Argument commanding attention, to say, I speak from God, or for God. As when the Lord himself speaks, all ought to hear; even those things that have no ears, are call'd upon to hear him speaking, or what is spoken from him, *Hear O Heavens, and hearken O Earth*, saith the Lord (*Isa.* 1. 2.) Now, as when the Lord speaks all should hear, so all should hear when any thing is spoken on the Lords behalf; they that speak for the Lord in truth, speak also from the Lord. As truth bears the stamp and Image of God, so it tends to the glory of God. To resist the truth of God, spoken by a true Messenger, is to refuse the God of truth, (*Luke* 10. 16.) *He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.* Not to hear those that speak for the Lord, and from the Lord, is indeed not to hear the Lord, and so they will be judged in the great day.

Thirdly, In that *Elihu* gathers up his Spirits, girds up the Loins of his mind upon this consideration, that he was to speak on Gods behalf,

Note,

They who speak for God, may speak with courage, and be bold.

If any thing can encourage us to, and in a work, 'tis this, that we engage for God. That which puts spirit and life into us, is our end

end and design in doing or speaking; now this is the highest end or design, to argue for God; and therefore it may put the highest life, and liveliest spirits into man, it may make him that is weak, strong as a Gyant, and him that is fearful, bold as a Lyon, when he can speak in truth, that he is speaking truth on Gods behalf.

I will shew thee that I have yet to speak.

That word (*yet*) hath a great Emphasis in it; he had been speaking in Gods behalf before, and sayes he, *I have yet to speak*

Observe,

They that truly begin to speak for God, will persevere in speaking for God.

As when we have spoken our all of God, and for God, there is yet more to be spoken of him, and for him (God is an everlasting Argument, a Subject that can never be finished) so they who have begun (with an honest heart and right aims) to speak for God, will hold on and never give over to speak for him, while they have a call to it. A soul toucht with true zeal, finds it hard to make an end, when once he hath begun so good, and so honourable a service, as to speak for God. So much of the second Argument used by *Elihu* to gain attention: *Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee what I have yet to speak on Gods behalf.* He spake for God. The third followeth.

Vers. 3. *I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe Righteousnesse to my Maker.*

This (I say) is *Elihu's* third Argument brought to the same purpose as before.

I will fetch my knowledge from afar,

Or a great way off. From how far? There are four notions under which knowledge may be said to be fetcht from afar.

לְיֹצְרִי אֶשָּׂא־דֵעִי
Longinquo ex abundi ex lingua ejus omate adjici tur. Mercer. Dicar si mea quidam longe petita. Vat.

First, That's knowledge *from afar*, which is of things out of sight, or invisible, of things which not only are not, but cannot be seen. As if *Elihu* had said, *I will not discourse about such things as fall under common sensitive observation, I will not speak of eye-objects, but of that and such things, as no eye hath seen, nor can see,*

of

of God, and of Divine things, the things of God.

Secondly, *From afar*, may imply this, I will not treat about matters of a late Date or Edition, but of things done long since. Thus *David* preface'd his Speech, (*Psal.* 68. 2, 3.) *I will open my mouth in a Parable, I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard, and known, and our Fathers have told us.* Such things are far off from us, which were transacted and done a great while ago, or in former Ages, or in the first Age. As if *Elihu* had said, *I'le fetch my knowledge, not from yesterday, but from ancient times, from the very beginning of the Creation, or from the Foundation of the world*; such things are truly afar off; or, *I will fetch my knowledge from those things which were before the beginning*; that's more truly afar off. Thus a Learned Translater glosseth upon the Text, *I will speak even of those things which were before any thing visible was, even from Eternity.* The things of Eternity are most proper to set forth and illustrate the honour of God, and most lively expresse his Power and Divine Perfections.

Prout res fuit non tantum in de a secula, sed etiam ante omnia secula. Jun.

Thirdly, When he saith, *I will fetch my knowledge from afar*; the meaning may be this, It shall be of admirable and sublime things, the reason of which could not easily be given, nor presently found out. Those things are far from us, which we cannot dive into, nor reach, nor fathome the bottome of, by the Line of our understanding: Such are the secret Counsels of God before the world was, and some wayes of his Providence in dealing with men ever since the world was, which are therefore said to be unsearchable, and past finding out; and of these *Elihu* speaks at large in this Chapter, to the 26th verse.

Ex operibus Dei admirandis et sublimibus. Merc.

Fourthly, *I will fetch my knowledge from afar*, may be thus understood, I will speak to thee of things which I have much studied for; I will not speak what comes next, nor what lyes uppermost, but will beat my brains for what I say, in most serious meditation; I will not offer thee any raw or undigested sentiments, but shall well and maturely consider before I speak; nor will I speak what my weak reason only tells me is true, but what by light from above, and I hope by the special teachings of God, I know to be true: I will fetch my knowledge, or that which I make known, from the depths of my heart, not from sudden flashes and conceits of my head. In all these senses possibly *Elihu* was resolved to fetch his knowledge from afar, he would not

Ex remotis sed necessariis principiis agam, non naviter excogitata sed principio cognita, et accuratè præmeditata proferam. Scult.

not take up, nor trouble *Job* with things that were obvious, common, or easie to be had, but bring what he had to say out of the closest Cabinets, and utter conceptions, which were most remote from the common road.

There is yet another apprehension concerning *Elihu's* purpose, when he saith, *I will fetch my knowledge from afar*, with which I rather close than any of the former; that his meaning was to speak to *Job* of those things, which as they are not easily comprehended, because the sublimest works of God in nature, so because they might seem far from the present matter; As if he had said, We have been arguing all this while about Gods dispensations here below, but now I'le speake of things that are wrought above, of those both useful and dreadful or terrible Meteors, the snow and raine, the windes, the lightening and the thunder; these things may be thought very forreigne and heterogeneal, very far off from the busines in hand, but I will speak to thee of these things, even of the works of God in the Heavens, in the Air, in the Chambers of the Clouds, and I will convince thee by what God doth there above, of his righteousnes, in what he doth here below. The wisdome and power of God, in ordering those natural works in the Clouds, and in the Air, prove that man hath no cause to complain about his providential works on earth: For as those wonderful visible works of God are real demonstrations of those invisible things of God, his eternal power and God-head, so they declare both his righteousnes and goodnes, his wrath and mercy towards the children of men in the various dispensations of them. And so although those things might be thought far from the poynt which *Elihu* supposed *Job* questioned, at least by consequences, the righteousnes of God in his severe dealings with him, yet indeed they contained principles or general grounds, by which that which *Elihu* had engaged to maintain might be fully confirmed and unanswerably concluded. This, I conceive, is the special *afar off*, that *Elihu* intended to fetch his knowledge from, as may appear in the close of this Chapter, and in the next, quite thorow. *I will fetch my knowledge from afar.*

Hence note;

First, *The natural works of God, or the works of God in nature, are to be studied and searched out.*

As the works of grace are afar off from all men, in a ſtate of nature; ſo the works of God in nature, are very far off from the moſt of men; they know little of Gods works in the Heavens, or in the Earth, in the Sea, or in the Aire, yet all theſe are to be ſearched out with diligence by the ſons of men.

Secondly, Note;

The works of Creation and Providence, ſhew that God is, and what he is.

We may ſee who God is, in what he hath done; we ſay *things are in their working, as they are in their being.* God hath done like himſelf in all that he hath done; his own works (as well as his own Word) ſpeak him beſt, (*Pſal.* 19. 1.) *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament ſheweth his handy-work*, &c. The raine and ſnow declare the power of God, Thunder and Lightening ſhew what he can do.

Thirdly, Note;

Knowledge is worth our longeſt travel, it will quit coſt to go far for it.

We ſay, Some things are *far fetcht, and dear bought*; true knowledge, eſpecially the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt deſerves to be far fetcht, and it cannot be too dear bought; we muſt drive a ſtrange kind of trade with the truths of God; we muſt be alwayes buying, and never ſelling, yet that's a commodity will never lye upon our hands, never brayde. If we were to fetch our knowledge from afar, as to the diſtance of place, we ſhould not think much of it. The Queen of the South fetcht her knowledge from afar, ſhe came a very great way, undertook a long journey, to hear the wiſdome of *Solomon*; in that ſenſe we ſhould be willing to fetch our knowledge from afar; yet ſome will ſcarce ſtep over the threſhold to fetch in knowledge. It is prophecied (*Dan.* 12. 4.) *Many ſhall run to and fro, and knowledge ſhall be increaſed.* Knowledge ought to be travell'd for as much as any thing in the world. We fetch our gold and ſilver, and rich Commodities, afar off, we go to the ends of the Earth for them, through a thouſand deaths and dangers; we ſayle within three inches of death for many moneths together, to fetch worldly riches from afar off; and ſhall we not fetch knowledge afar off, how far ſoever it is from

from us in diſtance of place, and what labour or coſt ſoever we beſtow to fetch it in? *I will fetch my knowledge from afar,*

I will aſcribe righteouſneſs to my Maker.

These words contain the ground, purpoſe, or deſigne of *Elihu* in this whole diſcourſe, which was to maintain the righteouſneſs of God; *I* (ſaith he) *will aſcribe* (the Hebrew ſtrictly is *give*) *righteouſneſs to my Maker*; here's a very great undertaking, to give righteouſneſs to God; God gives and imputes righteouſneſs to us; 'Tis the ſumme of the Goſpel, that God imputes or aſcribes righteouſneſs to ſinners: Now as God in a Goſpel ſenſe, gives righteouſneſs to us, both the righteouſneſs of juſtification, which is lodged in the perſon of Chriſt, and the righteouſneſs of ſanctification, which is lodged in our own perſons, though the ſpring and principle of that alſo be in Chriſt ſtill; ſo we muſt give righteouſneſs to God; that is, both believe and declare or publiſh to all the world, that God is juſt, and give him the praiſe of his juſtice, which is the beſt and nobleſt work we can do on Gods behalf in this world. There are two moſt excellent works, which indeed contain all our work in this world.

אתנ צדק

First, To do righteouſly, or act righteouſneſs our ſelves. Secondly, To aſcribe righteouſneſs unto God.

But you will ſay, what is it to give or aſcribe righteouſneſs to God?

I anſwer, It is to acknowledge, that God is righteous in all his wayes, and holy in all his works. 'Tis mans duty to juſtifie God, to aſcribe that righteouſneſs to him, which is properly his own. 'Tis Gods grace, his free-grace to juſtifie man, to aſcribe that righteouſneſs to him which is properly anothers. *David* made profeſſion of the former as his duty, (*Pſal.* 50. 3, 4.) *I acknowledge my tranſgreſſions, and my ſin is ever before me; that thou mighteſt be juſtified in thy ſayings, and clear when thou judgeſt:* That is, I'le confeſs my ſin, that all the world may ſee the righteouſneſs of thy dealings with me, though thou ſhouldeſt deale never ſo ſeverely with me, though thou ſhouldeſt ſpeak the biteereſt things againſt me, & pronounce a ſentence of heavieſt judgement upon me. The Apoſtle referring to this place in the *Pſalmes*, quotes the words in a paſſive forme and ſenſe, not of God judging man, but of God judged by man, (*Rom.* 3. 4.) *Let God be true,*

Is qui peccat et confitetur deo peccatum juſtificat deum, cedens ei victori et ab eo gratiam ſperans. Ambroſ. l. 6. in Luc.

true, but every man a lyar; as it is written, that thou mighteſt be juſtified in thy ſayings, and mighteſt overcome when thou art judged. As if *David* had ſaid, according to the Apoſtles reading out of the Septuagint, (which yet as learned *Beza* in his Annotations affirmeth, ought to be expounded actively, as if, I ſay, *David* had thus expreſſed himſelf) Lord, I know ſome men will take the boldneſs to queſtion thee, yea and to condemn thee of rigour, when they ſee thy afflicting hand heavy upon me; therefore, either to prevent ſuch raſh judgements of man, or that thou mayeſt gaine the day, and have the better in the opinion of all good and wiſe men, over thy Judges, Behold, I here freely confeſs my great ſin, with all the aggravating circumſtances of it, and ſurely they who know, or ſhall hear, how greatly I have ſinned againſt thee, cannot but juſtifie thee, how great ſoever my ſufferings may be. To ſpeak thus is to aſcribe righteouſneſs unto God, in all that he doth, whether with reſpect to his publique judgements upon Nations, or particular, upon perſons, in any way of affliction he is pleaſed, and ſeeth need, to exerciſe them with.

Iſtud ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαι σε, active meo quidem judicio neceſſario explicandum eſt, ut Græca Hebræa reſpondeant. Bez: in Rom: 3. 4.

And the reaſon why *Job* was here charged by *Elihu* as a perſon not giving righteouſneſs to God, was, becauſe he did not ſit down quietly and patiently under his hand in ſufferings, but muttered and complained as a man unſatisfied with, though he did not openly murmur againſt the dealings of God with him. To give righteouſneſs to God, is not only, not to accuſe him as unrighteous and unjuſt, but to thank him for, and honour him in all that he doth, or to ſpeak good of his Name, under all our ſufferings of evil. Further, to aſcribe righteouſneſs to God, is to juſtifie him, though he give never ſo much proſperity to unjuſt and wicked men (*Jer.* 12. 1.) *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talke with thee of thy judgements. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked proſper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherouſly?* Some begin to think, ſurely God is not righteous, when they ſee the unrighteous proſper, and at reſt, while righteous ones are afflicted with continual hurries and troubles; but whatſoever God doth with us or ours, whatſoever peace he gives to wicked men, whatſoever trouble to good men, he is ſtill righteous; and to acknowledge this ſincerely, is actually to do what *Elihu* undertakes to do, even to aſcribe righteouſneſs to *our Maker*. And ſurely that knowledge will quit the coſt, though

though we have fetcht it very far, by which we are taught, and have learn'd to aſcribe righteouſneſs (for that's the aſcribing of glory) to our Maker. *I* (ſaith *Elihu*) *will aſcribe righteouſneſs*

To my Maker.

There's ſomething in that expreſſion very conſiderable; *Elihu* doth not ſay, I will aſcribe righteouſneſs to God, but ſpeaks of God under that relation, *Hu Maker*. The word ſignifies not only in General to make or create, of which work *Moſes* treats in the firſt of *Geneſis*, but it notes the doing of a thing, firſt, with diligence, ſecondly, with ſkill & great intention of mind, 'tis to draw all our ſpirits together in a work, as Artiſts do; This divine art or ſkill did chiefly appear and ſhine forth in the creation or formation of man. Not that God ſtraines himſelf in any work, but he ſpeaks thus, to ſhew that the higheſt perfections and exactneſs imaginable, yea beyond all imagination, were centred and laid into the works of God, or the things that he hath made. *will aſcribe righteouſneſs to*

פעל *importat facere aliquid cum intentione diligentia energia quæ valde enitet in formatione hominis.* Bold:

My Maker.

He doth not ſay, *to the Maker of man*, or to the Maker of Heaven and Earth, but to *my Maker*; he appropriates that common work of God to himſelf. God is the maker of every Creature, the leaſt worme, the leaſt fly is of his making, yet *Elihu* ſpeaks of it as his peculiar priviledge, *my Maker*.

There's a great Emphaſis of affection in thoſe Pronounes, *Mine, Thine, His*. *Elihu* in this *my* intimates a friendly ſweetneſs and cloſeneſs of relation between God and him. To call another *Mine*, is more than to call him a friend of mine; And to ſay, God is *my Maker*, is more than to ſay, He is the maker of me, or the maker of my ſoul and body. 'Tis the Dialect of lovers: Whom we love we call *Ours*. It is ſo in the writings of Heathen Poets and Orators. One of them ſaid, *I muſt do this with the gifts of mine*, that is, of my friends; and another, *I only am my to mine*. Much love reignes in this Language of faith up and down the Scriptures, chiefly in thoſe raptures of divine delight between Chriſt and the Spouſe in the Book of *Canticles*. *Elihu* is here greatly affected, as with the righteouſneſs of God in all his works, ſo in the workmanſhip beſtowed on him: *I* (ſaith he) *will aſcribe righteouſneſs to my Maker*.

Dolicata ſunt hæc pronomina Meum, Tuum, Suum, *et plena affectionis; pronomen hoc ſubſtantive ponitur pro amico. Dulceſq; meorum reliquias.* Virgil: Æniad: 4. *Ego meorum ſolus ſum meus.* Terent:

Hence

Hence Note;
First, *God is the Maker of man.*

I shall not stay upon that.

Secondly, In that he holds himself engag'd to stand up for God as his Maker,

Note,
The Common benefits of God to man, should be acknowledged, and he honoured for them.

God hath made man and beast, and he preserves man and beast. A godly man sees peculiar mercy to him in both, though they be common mercies. *General mercies should have, they highly deserve, special remembrances.* All the works of God are to be lookt to as personal engagements. God hath made others as well as thee, yet so remember him to be *thy Maker, as if he had made none but thee*; and indeed every one that is made, is as much beholding to God, as if he alone had been made. As some things which are made in common for all men (the Sun, the Air, *&c.*) are so made, that no man could have more of them than he hath, if they had been made for him only: So though it be common to all men, that God is their Maker, yet no man could have more in his making, if none had been made but he. One of the Ancients represents all the Creatures offering themselves to man, in general, and speaking these three words: First, *Receive us cheerfully*, for we were made for thee; Secondly, *Render thanks for us daily*, for we are all made useful unto thee; Thirdly, *Take heed you do not abuse us*, for you must give an account to our Maker and yours, how you have used us. And surely, as we should strive to honour God for all things which he hath made, so mostly for our own making. The Lord is often (in the Old Testament especially) spoken of under this Relation (*Psal.* 121. 2.) *Our help standeth in the Name of the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth.* (So *Psal.* 124. 8. *Psal.* 95. 6. *Psal.* 146. 6.) Still God is remembred as the Maker of all things; and he is thus remembred, not only in opposition to Idols, or false gods, who are gods made by man, not the makers of man, but God is thus remembred and recorded in Scripture, to preserve a grateful memory of God in man, as he is the Maker of man. He that forgets God as his Maker, will never remember, much less answer

'*Accipe, Redde, Cave.*

answer and accomplish the ends for which he was made.

Thirdly, *I will ascribe righteousness to My Maker.*

Note, *A godly man takes God as his own, and appropriates him by Faith in all his Relations.*

Faith takes not only a share in God, but all of God; *My God, my Father, my Maker, my Redeemer, are strains of Faith.* A Believer doth as it were ingross God to himself, yet desires and endeavours, that all, as well as himself, may have their part and portion in God, yea God for their Portion. *Job* said (*Chap.* 19. 25.) *I know that my Redeemer liveth*: He spake as if he had got a Redeemer, not only to, but by himself. Thus also holy *Paul* of Christ, (*Gal.* 2. 22.) *Who loved me, & gave himself for me*; as if he had been given for him alone, and loved none but him. This is the highest work of Faith, and 'tis the signification of our hottest love to God, it shews endearedness of affection to him, as well as neerness and clearness of interest in him, when we thus take him as our own Saviour, Father, *Maker. I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.*

Observe, Fourthly;
He who is the Maker of all men, can be unrighteous to no man, nor is lyable to the censure of any man, whatever he doth.

'Tis impossible that he who made us should wrong or injure us, and that upon a twofold Principle; First, Of the respect he hath for Justice towards all those whom he hath made. God is so tender, that he doth not *wilingly* (or with his heart) *afflict, nor grieve the children of men, to crush under his feet all the Prisoners of the earth* (Lam. 3. 33, 34.) much less will he (as it followeth, *vers.* 35, 36.) *turn away the right of a man before the face of the most High*, that is, before his own face, who is the Most High: As if it had been said, The Lord will not pervert Judgment in any mans Case, that comes before him. Or, if we take those words *before the face of the Most High*, as denoting the highest Judicatory on Earth, as our Margin intimates, putting there, for *Most High*, *A Superiour*; then the meaning is, The Lord doth not approve, that any

any earthly Judge, though Supream, or most Superiour, should turn aside the right of a man, how inferiour soever; for, as the 36th verse hath it, *To subvert a man in his Cause, the Lord approveth not*; or, as the Hebrew is rendred, *seeth not*, that is, he seeth it not with approbation, but indeed with detestation, and will severely punish such subverters of Justice. Secondly, It is impossible that he who hath made us should wrong or injure us, upon the principle of his Soveraignty over all those whom he hath made. He that gives all men their being, he that gives all to all men that are in being, can be unrighteous to no man, whatsoever he taketh from him, or doth with him. We have *Job* in the beginning of this Book (*Chap.* 1. 21.) ascribing righteousness to God his Maker upon this reason, or principle, *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away*; *blessed be the Name of the Lord.* It is he that made me a man, 'tis he who once made me a rich man, a great man, *the greatest man of all the men of the East*, (Chap. 1. 3.) What if now he hath lessened me, and left me little or nothing? What if he hath now made me a mean man, a poor man (in account) a no man? what if God hath now stript me naked, and taken all from me? He hath taken nothing but what he gave; why then should I take it ill at his hands, or have so much as an ill thought of him? the Lord gives, and the Lord takes; there's no unrighteousness in all this. If God should utterly undoe us, he doth us no wrong; if he should as it were, unmake us, let us consider he is our Maker, & then we must say, there is no unrighteousness in him, yea we shall be ready (with *Elihu* in the Text) to ascribe righteousness unto him. And therefore, as a Corollary from the whole,

Note, Fifthly;

Whatsoever God doth with us, or others, we ought to maintain the honour of God, and retain good thoughts of him, both as righteous and good.

Though Heaven and Earth be moved, though the World be full of confusion and unrighteousness, yet we must ascribe righteousness to God. Whatsoever or whosoever falls to the dust, the Honour and Justice of God must not. Thus far of *Elihu*'s third Argument for attention; the Fourth is at hand in the next verse.

Vers.

Vers. 4. *For truly my words shall not be false; he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.*

As if he had said, *I am purposed to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth; therefore hear me. Truly my words shall not be false.* He gives assurance for, or warrants the truth of his words, while he saith, they shall not be false. Negatives in Scripture often carry a strong affirmation. *The Father of a Fool hath no joy*, saith *Solomon* (Prov. 17. 21.) that is, he shall have a great deal of sorrow. When the Scripture denyeth forgiveness to any sort of impenitent sinners, or saith, their sin shall not be forgiven, the sense is, they shall be punished. When we say proverbially, *Goods ill gotten shall not prosper*, the meaning is, they shall perish, and do him mischief that hath gotten them; not only shall he not thrive with them, but they shall ruine and undoe him; his goods ill gotten, shall do him no good when the evill day is come, much less shall they be able, or he by them, to prevent the coming of an evil day. Once more: When we say, *Such a thing is not ill done*, our intendment is, 'tis very well done, excellently done. So here, when *Elihu* saith, *Truly my words shall not be false*, his meaning is, I will speak truth, and truth to the highest, I will speak nothing but what shall endure the Touchstone and the Test; I will not offer thee a Syllable of falshood; what I alledge and urge either for God, or against thee, shall not be fetcht or hammer'd out of my own brain, and so subject to errour and mistake, but such as God, who cannot erre (by whose Spirit, and in whose stead, I speak unto thee) hath inspired me with, or taught me for thy conviction and instruction.

Non est verum, pro pessimum est; sic non remittetur ei, i. e. punietur. Drus.

Fourthly, When he saith, *Truly, my words shall not be false*, we may take it two wayes: First, As to the matter spoken; Secondly, As to the mind of the Speaker: when truth is thus spoken, 'tis truly spoken; thus much *Elihu* engag'd for: As if he had said, *The matter that I speak, shall be true, and I will speak it in truth, or with a true mind and heart; I will not speak any thing to flatter thee, nor for my own ends, to trouble thee; my words shall be candid and sincere, as well as sound and orthodox: I will speak the truth, and speak it in truth.* Some speak that which is false (as I may say) in the sincerity of their heart, thinking it to be true; and

others speak truth in the falseness of their heart, that is, they have some by ends in speaking it; from both those *Elihu* here clears himself, and with both these *Job* had taxed his Friends, *Chap.* 13. 7. *Chap.* 17. 5.

Hence observe;

It is the highest Commendation of a Speaker, to speak truth, and the higher the Truth, the higher the Commendation of the Speaker.

Words can have no greater beauty, nor richer ornament, than Truth, and Truth is never more adorn'd, than by plainness of Speech, nor more beautiful, than when (like our first Parents in innocency) 'tis naked. To speak *truly*, is much more honourable, than to speak *eloquently*; one plain word of plain truth, is better than a long painted Oration, tinctured with the least errour: What then are long Orations, and large Volumes, which have, upon the matter, as many errours as words, as many lyes and flatteries, as Periods and Sentences! at best, some in putting off their words, do as others in putting off their wares, mingle good and bad together. 'Tis dangerous to make such medlies. As we must not put bad for good, darkness for light, bitter for sweet, falshood for Truth, so we must not blend or put bad among the good, nor mix darkness with light, nor falshood with Truth. And as 'tis dangerous to mix any falshood of Doctrine with Truth, so to mix falshood of Heart, with Truth of Doctrine, or to speak Truth, but not in truth. The Apostle is zealous in protesting against falshood, and professing for the Truth, in both these respects; First, as to the truth of the Doctrine, or of the matter spoken, (2 *Cor.* 2. 17.) *We are not as many, which corrupt* (or deal deceitfully with) *the Word of God*; we do not adulterate or mix it with our own imaginations or inventions; which he further confirms (*Chap.* 4. 2.) *We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, &c.* Secondly, As he spake truth of Doctrine, so he spake it in the truth of his heart, as he assured the *Corinthians*, in both the places last-mentioned; we are, not only no corrupters of the Word of God, *but as of sincerity* (there's truth of heart) *as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.* And again, *We walk not in craftiness, nor handle the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commend our selves to every mans Conscience,*

science, in the sight of God. He makes a protest yet once more in the same tenour, and somewhat higher; (2 *Cor.* 13. 8.) *We can do nothing against the Truth*; O blessed Impotency! *but for the Truth*; O blessed Ability! Who would not be weak against the Truth? who would not be strong for the Truth, which is strongest of all, and will prevail? And as we should speak nothing against the Truth, so nothing but the Truth, nothing beside the Truth, nothing that may be any blemish, or turn to the least disservice of the Truth; yea, though it should be (as we hope) for the service of that excellent and amiable thing called *Peace*; a thing so excellent, that we cannot over-bid, nor pay too much for it, unless we part with, and pay away truth for it: and if ever we do so, we over-bid for it, and over-buy it indeed, and shall have cause at last to repent of our bargain, and cry out, *we have burnt our Fingers*, and it would be well if that were all. Therefore let us remember the Lords admonition by his Prophet (*Zech.* 8. 19.) *Love the Truth and Peace*: First, Truth, then Peace. Nor was there ever any true Lover of Truth, that was not also a Lover of Peace; nor any true Lover of Peace, but was such a Lover of Truth, that he could lay down, or let go, his Peace for it. One of the Ancients tells us, There ought to be so great a love of Truth in us, that, whatsoever we say to be true, should be as much as if we had sworn it to be true, or had delivered it upon Oath. There is no more goodness in what we say, than there is Truth in what we say. A Lye in report or Discourse, and a Lye in Doctrine or Dispute, are both abominable to God, and should be so to man; therefore *Elihu* heartily disclaims it, *Truly my words shall not be false.*

Tantus sit in te veritatis amor, ut quicquid dixeris, juratum putes. Hieron.

He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.

This Assertion suits well with the fore-going Protestation: He that is perfect in knowledge, will not, cannot utter words of falshood. But who is that? and where to be found? Some understand it of God; *He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee*, that is, *God is with thee* in this business; and without all controversie, it may be said of God, in the highest and strictest sense of Perfection; *He is perfect in knowledge. The Lord is a God of knowledge* (1 Sam. 2. 3.) as well as a God of mercy; he is as knowing, as he is merciful, perfect in both. Taking the Text so;

חמים דעות *Integer scientiarum, vel integer scientiis.* Heb.

is as if *Elihu* had said, *Thou hadst need, O Job, look to thy self, and diligently attend to what is spoken, for thou hast not to do with man, with one like thy self only, but thou hast to do with God.* Some insist much, yea, altogether upon this Interpretation of the word; *God is with thee*, therefore receive truth; God cannot be deceiv'd, nor doth he deceive, therefore hearken and obey. Yet *Elihu* might speak thus with respect to the message brought by himself; for when man speaking in the Name of God speaks the mind of God to us, it may be said, God is with us, and speaks to us by him. The Apostle saith (2 *Cor.* 13. 5.) *If any require a Sign or Token of Christ speaking in me.* Christ speaks, while his Messengers and Ministers speak truth. The same Apostle testified of the *Thessalonians*, that they took his speaking as Gods speaking, (1 *Thess.* 2. 13.) *When ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but (as it is in truth) the Word of God.* And therefore I conceive we are to understand the words of *Elihu* concerning *Elihu* himself, yet not as in himself, but as fitted for, and assisted in the work by God, *He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee*; As if he had said, *Though I am but a young man, yet thou hast not to deal with an ignorant man, with one who is but a novice or smatterer in the things of God, with one that is yet in the Elements of Divine knowledge and learning; He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.* And it is conceiv'd that *Elihu* speaks thus in the third person for Modesties sake, as the Apostle *Paul* also did (2 *Cor.* 12. 2, 3.) *I knew a man in Christ, &c.* He doth not say, I *Paul* was *caught up to the third Heaven, and heard unspeakable words, &c.* but I knew such a man. Thus *Elihu* here; and doubtless, he had been lyable to censure, as arrogating too much to himself, had he spoken in the first person, *I that am perfect in knowledge am with thee*: Therefore he covers and conceals himself by expressing it in the third person, *He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee*; that is, He that is with thee to convince thee of thy former errour, and to give thee better counsel, *is perfect in knowledge.*

But is that true? was *Elihu*, or is any man perfect in *knowledge*, or (as the Hebrew hath it plurally) in *knowledges*, that is, in all kinds of knowledge, or in all the degrees of knowledge of any kind? Surely, No man is perfect in the knowledge of any one thing, much less of all things, (1 *Cor.* 13. 9, 12.) *We know in part,*

part, and prophesie in part, we see but darkly, &c. How then can it be said of *Elihu*, *He is perfect in knowledge?* I answer; There is a twofold perfection. First, Absolute. Secondly, Comparative. There's no man living here below hath absolute perfection of knowledge; yet one man being compar'd with another, may be said to be perfect in knowledge, another not: There are various degrees of knowledge in man; the highest degree of knowledge compar'd with the lowest, may be call'd perfect knowledg. Thus we are to understand *Elihu* speaking at the rate of a creature, not of God, or as becomes and is commensurable with the state of man in this life, whose best perfection in knowledge, is to know his own imperfections.

Secondly, *Elihu* speaks not of any perfection of knowledge, but of being perfect, that is, sincere, in knowledge. As if he had said, What I know, I know with an honest, upright heart and intention: I do not know to abuse thee or others, I make not use of my knowledge to deceive the simple, but to inform them. Some are crafty and cunning in knowledge, not perfect in it; they are knowing as the Devil is knowing, who takes his name *Daemon* from his knowledge, yet he is not perfect, but corrupt in his knowledge, he is subtil, and full of devices to do mischief with his knowledge. That's perfect knowledge, which is sincerely imployed for the Glory of God, and the good of those with whom we have to do. So then, the meaning of *Elihu* may be summ'd up thus in short; *He that is with thee* (that is my self) *will deal with thee to the best of my understanding, and in the Integrity of my heart.* This also suits well with the former part of the verse, *Truly my words shall not be false.*

Hence Note;

First, *Though no man knoweth all things, yet some know much more than others.*

One is a Babe, and needs milk; another is a grown Christian, and can, not only receive, but give the strong meat of instruction, (*Heb.* 5. 13, 14.) Some cannot understand wisdome, when spoken by the perfect, they know not how to learn, yea, some (as the Apostle speaks, 2 *Tim.* 3. 7.) *are ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.* Others can *speak wisdome among them that are perfect* (2 Cor. 2. 6.) that is, they are got

to

to the highest Form of Gospel knowledge, and are fit to be Teachers.

Secondly, Note;

Whether we know little or much, this is the perfection of our knowledge, honestly to imploy and improve it, for the information of the ignorant, and the conviction of those who are in errour.

. If we have but one Talent of knowledge, yet if we use it well, we are perfect in knowledge. They who have digged (as they think) to the heart, and dived to the bottom of all Sciences, yea into the heart of the Scriptures too, yet if they keep their knowledge to themselves, or know only for themselves; if they have base ends and by respects, in vending their knowledge, if they trade with their knowledge for self only, or to do mischief to others, their knowledge is not only utterly imperfect, but, as to any good account, nothing, or none at all. As he that slothfully hides his Talent, so he, who either vain-gloriously shews it, or deceitfully useth it, shall be numbred among those who have none, (*Matth.* 25. 29. *Luke* 8. 18.)

Lastly, *Elihu* speaking of himself in a third person, Note,

Modesty is a great vertue, and the grace of all our Graces.

He that saith, I am perfect in knowledge, knoweth not what is neerest him, himself. We should use our knowledge as much as we can, but shew it as little as we can, unless in the using of it. 'Tis best for us to take little notice of our own goodness, and not to know our own knowledge. Usually they have but little, who are much in shewing (unless much called to it) what they have. Empty Vessels sound most, and shallow Brooks make the loudest noyse in passage. *Moses* put a Vail upon his face, as unwilling to have that Divine beauty seen. While we are provoked, and even necessitated to discover our knowledge, we should cover our selves. It is our duty to impart our knowledge, but our folly to proclaim it.

Thus far *Elihu* hath been preparing his Patient *Job*, to receive his Medicinal instructions; he is now ready to administer them, for the cure and quieting of his distempered mind.

JOB,

JOB, Chap. 36. Vers. 5, 6.

5. Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: he is mighty in strength and wisdome.

6. He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor.

Elihu having done prefacing, proceeds to the matter of his discourse, wherein he giveth a large description, of the power, wisdome, and Justice of God, in his disposure and government of the world; First, In things Civil, which he prosecutes to the 26th verse of this Chapter. Secondly, In things Natural, which he handles to the 23d verse of the following Chapter. He begins in these two verses, with an excellent *Elogium*, or with the high praise of God in his divine perfections, into which he leads us with a command of attention, or serious consideration, yea of wonder and admiration.

Vers. 5. *Behold, God is mighty.*

I have several times opened the sense and intendment of this word *Behold*, and therefore will not stay upon it here; But what are we to behold? what is the sight which *Elihu* represents to our faith? it is God in his might; *Behold, God is mighty.* God is strong, potent, omnipotent, God is mighty, yea Almighty: The words are a plain assertion of that royal Attribute, the Mightiness or Almightiness, the Potency or Omnipotency of God. *Elihu* promised to ascribe righteousness unto God *his Maker*, yet here he begins with his *Mightiness*; and this we find often both ascribed to God, and asserted by him. When God made a Covenant with *Abraham*, he thus offers himself to his faith, though by another word in the Original, (*Gen.* 17. 1.) *I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect*, or upright, or sincere, (as our Margin reads it) The same title is again repeated by *Isaac*, when he dispatcht his son *Jacob* with a blessing to *Padan-Aram*, to avoyd the fury of his brother *Esau*, (Gen. 28. 3.) Thus also spake the blessed Virgin, (*Luke* 1. 49.) *He that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is his Name.* The holy Scriptures

אל כביר *Magnus, grandis, potens, id est potentissimus.*

tures every where exalt the name of God by this glorious Attribute; *The mighty God, even the Lord hath spoken*, (Psal. 50. 1.) And he seems even to delight in this title, *The mighty God of Jacob*. *Jacob* was mighty with God in prayer, as a Prince he had power with God and prevailed; and God loved and loves to put forth his might for *Jacob*, his Church and people, in answer of their prayers. But I shall not stay in general upon this title, only opening it a little, shall make some inferences from it. *God is mighty* in a two-fold notion.

First, In authority, or in command; he commands in chief; God is Soveraigne and Supreame; the Legislative power is in his hand, he gives Lawes, and he gives the Law to all the world, (*Psal.* 62. 11.) *Once hath he spoken, and I heard it twice, that power* (Soveraignity, Law-giving power) *belongs to God*; He is so mighty in this governing power, that he doth not only give Lawes to rule Nations, but he disposeth of all the Rulers in Nations, (*Daniel* Chap. 2. 21. Chap. 4. 17.) And again, (*Psal.* 22. 28.) *The Kingdome is the Lords, and he is the Governour among the Nations.*

Secondly, Besides this power of Authority, which the Lord exerciseth paramount over all the world, he hath also another power or might; he hath the might of Strength, as well as the might of Authority. Some have a great, a mighty Authority, but they have little or no might to make good that Authority; they cannot effect or carry on what they command, how much right soever they have to command, yea how just and right soever that is which they command: they have Authoritive might, yet want Executive might, they cannot bring about, nor issue what they determine. But when *Elihu* asserts, *Behold, God is mighty*, we are to take it under both notions, he is mighty, as he hath the whole Legislative power in his hand, and he is mighty, as having also the whole Executive power in his hand. The sons of men are jealous about these two Powers, and labour to keep them in distinct hands, that they who have the Legislative power, may not have the Executive power also, as fearing what they would do were they vested with both: But God (beyond all dispute) hath both powers in himself, and it is impossible they should be taken from him, or devolved upon any others, otherwise than himself pleaseth, or permitteth; behold and wonder, God is mighty, (and

(and O how mighty is God!) in the union of these two powers; and to set forth yet further the wonder of his might, I shall give you seaven brief propositions, or assertions, concerning the might of God, as it is twisted and made up of these two mights or powers.

First, He is so mighty both in strength and power, that all the might which is in the creature, all the Legislative might, and all the Executive might, all the Authority, and all the ability which is in any man, is from him, and by him; that's it, which is said, (*Pro.* 8. 15.) *By me Kings reigne, and Princes decree Justice*; they have both their Authority, and their power to execute that Authority from me; every kind and degree of might (whatsoever it is) is but a derivation, a rivolet, from the Might and Power of God, that's the fountaine, the spring of all.

Secondly, Behold the mightinesse of God, as in giving, so in taking away power, whether the power of authority or of strength, from the sons of men; He taketh away might from the mighty. Sometimes such power, such authority, such command is put into the hands of others, that they who put it there, know not how to get it out again, but are mastered and over-power'd with the very power, which they trust others with; but such is the might of God, that whatever might of authority or strength he hath trusted or cloathed any of the Princes or Powers of this world with, he can presently take it out of their hands again, (*Psal.* 75. 7.) *God is the Judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another*; and it is as easie with him to put down, as it is to set up; as he can make the weak strong, so he can presently make the strong weak; this is the glory of the might of God, he can take away power, as well as give it.

Thirdly, *Behold, God is mighty*, for, *he can do whatsoever pleaseth him*; Certainly, he is Almighty that can do so; He whose power runs paralel with his will, he who can act as far as he desires, how mighty is he! none of the mighty ones of this world can do this. Oh, what work would some men make in the world, if they could do as much as they desire, if their power should alwayes extend, as far as, or be commensurate with their Will; yet thus it is with God. The Scriptures of truth are clear in it, (*Psal.* 115. 3.) where, when some prophane wretches had scoffed and jeered the people of God, with *where is your God?*

they presently answer, *Our God is in heaven, and he hath done whatsoever pleaseth him.* It is not what this man pleaseth, or what that man pleaseth, or what this sort or gange of men please, but what the Lord pleaseth, that is done, (and that he doth well, how ill soever men do it) both in heaven and in earth. The Lord will not do all that he can, for he could by his power reduce this world to its first principles, a Chaos, or into a nothing, as it was before that, but he can do whatsoever he will; all things are possible to God, yea all things are easie, nothing hard or difficult to God: And we may very well put a *behold* of admiration upon his might (and such is the might of God,) who can do whatsoever he willeth.

Fourthly, The Lord is so mighty, that *he can do all, without the help of any.* Some men are very mighty, but it is with other mens hands, with other mens strength; let them alone, let them stand by themselves, do but desert and leave them, and what can they do? just nothing. But such is the mightiness of God, the Almightiness of God, that if all second causes, if all persons, powers and Nations should leave him, in that which he intends should be done, he can do it himself without them. The Prophet setting forth the victory of Christ over his enemies, represents him speaking thus, (*Isa.* 63. 3.) *I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me.* Which though many interpret of his passive conquest by suffering as a Priest, yet most, of his active conquest as a King, which he usually atchieveth by himself alone, without any appearance of help from man. And though *Deborah* in her Song (*Judg.* 5.) pronounceth a curse upon those that came not out to help the Lord against the Mighty, yet it was not because the mighty God needed their help or service, but because they did owe it him, & in duty should have given it him. For, that the Lord wants no help, is further clear from the Prophet, (*Isa.* 59. 16.) *He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no Intercessor,* (none so much as to speak a word) *therefore his arme wrought salvation, and his righteousness it sustained him.* Not only, no arme was put forth to help, but no tongue so much as move or intercede for help to do it, yet his own arme did it. Thus the Prophet, (*Isa.* 44. 24.) *He stretcheth forth the Heavens alone, and laid the Foundations of the Earth by himself.* Now as it was with the Lord in the work of Creation, he had

had no helper, no assistant, he did it alone by himself; so it is as true, as to all works of providence. Let all men forsake him (as the Apostle *Paul* complained they did him, 2 *Tim.* 4. 16.) and no man stand by him, yet the Lord (what his purpose and counsel is) can bring to pass alone: O behold this might! he can do all things without the help of any; and not only so, but

Fifthly, God is so mighty, that he can bring all things to pass, or do what he pleaseth, though all creatures should be displeased, though all men and Angels, though all second causes stand up to hinder and to stop him. The Lord can work his will against every will, against all contradictions and oppositions. Thus the Prophet extols the power of God, (*Isa.* 14. 27.) *The Lord of Hosts hath purposed, and who shall disanul it? His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?* Where we have, first, the purpose of God, *none can disanull* that; Secondly, the execution of that purpose, *He stretcheth out his hand* (to do such or such a thing) *who shall turn it back?* Let all men and Devils joyn forces and counsels, let them strive to do it, they shall not be able to do it. We have a like confession, (*Dan.* 4. 35.) *He doth according to his will in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can stay his hand, or say to him, what dost thou?* Such is the mightiness of God, that he can work, not only when the creature doth not help him, or when they apostatize from and desert him or his interest, but though they set their hearts and heads, their hands, and their all against him, they cannot stay him, nor hinder his work; *I* (saith the Lord, *Isa.* 43. 13.) *will work, and who shall let it?*

Sixthly, Behold, how mighty the Lord is, he is so mighty, that he can do all these things, and never trouble himself in doing of them; he can do all things, and not be weary. We see the mightiest among men, the Powers of this world, how they are toyled, and moyled, how they are worn out, how they sweat and labour, and are ready to faint and tire, in bringing some poor business, some petty project about, or to its issue. But the greatest designes which the Lord hath in his heart to do, he can do them, without any weariesomness or trouble at all, (*Isa.* 40. 28.) *Dost not thou know that the Lord is not weary, neither doth he faint:* and when the Prophet saith, *the Lord is not weary, neither doth he faint*, the meaning is not this, the Lord is somewhat weary, only

he doth not faint, but the meaning is this, he hath not the leaſt wearineſs upon him, no more than a man hath in turning his hand; not only are all things poſſible to God, or ſuch as he can do, if he put forth the utmoſt of his power and ſtrength, if he make (as we ſay) much adoe, if he lay himſelf out to the full; not only are things thus poſſible to God, (which yet argueth wonderfull might) but behold, the Lord is ſo mighty, that there is nothing difficult unto him. Not only can he poſſibly do great things, but he can eaſily do them, he can do them without the leaſt trouble to himſelf: *There is nothing hard to him, who can do every thing.* Mighty men have done great things, but they will tell you they could hardly do them, they were forced to turn every ſtone, to ſtraine every veine of their hearts to do them; whereas the mighty God can do his work with as much eaſe, as deſire to have it done.

Seaventhly, Behold, God is mighty, ſo mighty that he can do any thing, but that which will argue that he is not almighty. The Scripture ſpeaks of ſomething which the Lord cannot doe, (*Tit.* 1. 2.) *In hope of eternal life, which God who cannot lye hath promiſed.* And again, the Apoſtle ſaith of God, not only making promiſe but oath to *Abraham*, (*Heb.* 6. 18.) *That by two Immutable things, in which it is impoſſible for God to lye, the heirs of promiſe might have ſtrong conſolation.* Once more, (2 *Tim.* 2. 13.) *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithfull, he cannot deny himſelf.* We have theſe and ſuch like negative Propoſitions concerning God, telling us what he cannot do. Now the only reaſon why it is ſaid, the Mighty God cannot do theſe things, is becauſe the doing of them would argue him not to be Almighty. To lye is to be weak; to deny himſelf would affirme his impotency, therefore he cannot do theſe things; the Lord is ſo mighty, ſo ſtrong, that it is impoſſible for him to do any thing, which ſhould declare any weakneſs or impotency in him. Thus I have given you ſeaven aſſertions concerning the might of God, all which may very well call for a *behold* of admiration and aſtoniſhment at the mightineſs of God. Take a few Inferences from this grand Aſſertion.

Firſt, For Comfort.

Secondly, For Terror. *Behold*, the Lord is Mighty, Almighty; this ſpeaks comfort to the people of God.

Firſt, Surely then he can do whatſoever he hath promiſed to do,

do, and if ſo, then look through the promiſes and ſee, whether God hath not promiſed, to do good things for his people in generall, and for every believer in particular; Behold, the Lord is mighty, theſe are not vaine words, he can fill up, and fulfill all his promiſes. As he hath made promiſes, ſo he can create performances. *Abraham* was fully perſwaded that what he had promiſed he was able to performe, (*Rom.* 4. 21.)

Secondly, If the Lord be mighty in all thoſe notions foreſhewed, then certainly he can do whatſoever we deſire him to do according to his will. As God hath not out-promiſed his power, ſo we cannot out-pray the power, nor out-ask the arme of God; we may quickly out-pray the power of man, and ask what he cannot do; he may ſay, I cannot do this for you, it is not in my power: but here is our comfort, if what we pray and ask be good for us to have, if it be juſt and righteous for him to do, let it be what it will, it is within the compaſſe of the power of God, who is alſo ready to performe it for us. The Apoſtle aſſureth us of this, (*Eph.* 4. 20.) *He is able to do for us abundantly, above what we ask or think*; he cannot only do what we ask, but he can do above what we ask, yea, abundantly above what we ask. How narrow, and ſhort, and poor, are our words and prayers, compared with the power of God! He can do abundantly for us above what we ask, and not only ſo, but above what we think. If a man ſhould have ſomewhat in his mind, that he is not able to expreſs, (as the mind is far larger than the tongue,) if a man think what he cannot ſpeak or utter, yet the Lord is of ſuch power, that he can do not only what we think, but abundantly above what we are able to think. How many requeſts do we put up daily to God in prayer for our perſons, for our families, for the Church of God, and about the Kingdoms of men, our own Kingdome eſpecially, is it not matter of ſingular comfort, that all theſe requeſts are before a Mighty God, a God who can quickly ſend down all our prayers in performances, and give us the fruit of all our askings? 'Tis an everlaſting Spring of comfort and encouragement unto the people of God, both in prayer and unto prayer; they pray to him who is *mighty*, mighty to do what they pray for.

Thirdly, If God be ſo mighty himſelf that he can do all things, then he is able to give us might to do what he requireth of us; if he be mighty enough to do what we ask, then he is mighty enough.

enough to enable us to do what he commands. We aſk many things of God, God commands many things at our hands; when we aſk, God is mighty to help us to what we aſk; and if what we aſk be what he commands us, he will ſurely help us to do what we aſk, even whatſoever he commands us to do; he ſtrengthens his people with might by his Spirit in the inner man, (*Eph.* 3. 16.) *Paul* could ſay, (*Phil.* 4. 18.) *I can do all things, through Chriſt ſtrengthening me*; Chriſt hath ſtrength to do all things, and Chriſt can make me ſtrong (ſaith the Apoſtle) to do all things; Chriſt hath ſtrength to do all things that he hath a mind to do, and he is ſtrong to ſtrengthen us in and for the doing of all things, that are according to his mind.

Fourthly, If God be thus mighty to do all things, if he hath all ſtrength, both commanding and executing ſtrength, then as he can give us ſtrength to do all things that he calls us to do, ſo he hath ſtrength enough to reward us for all we do for him; this is comfortable. Sometimes we work and labour for men, who are not able, they have little power, or if power enough, yet no will at all to reward us for it. But as the Lord is not unrighteous, to forget our labour, (*Heb.* 6. 10.) ſo he is not unable, that is, he is infinitely able to reward us. We find the ſtrength of God ſpoken of to this poynt, (*Jer.* 32. 18, 19.) *Thou ſheweſt loving kindneſs unto thouſands*, &c. *The great, the mighty God, the Lord of Hoſts is his Name*; *Great in counſel, and mighty in working, for thine eyes are open upon all the wayes of the ſons of men, to give every one according to his wayes, and according to the fruit of his doings.* When the Prophet had aſſerted, *God is mighty in working*, he brings it down to this, he is mighty in rewarding us for all our works. Do not think (what labour ſoever you have taken for the Lord) that you ſhall want a reward, for the Lord hath treaſure and ſtore, ſtrength and power enough, to give you a ſufficient recompence for all your labours.

Fifthly, This truth is matter of comfort and encouragement in doing good, not only as 'tis a ſervice to God, but as it is a kindneſs to men, eſpecially to the poor, and more eſpecially to Gods poor. The mightineſs of God ſhould move us to be charitable, yea, liberall and bountifull in our charity. The Apoſtle uſeth this Argument, (2 *Cor.* 9. 8.) for having ſaid, *God loveth a chearfull giver*, he preſently adds, *God is able to make all grace abound towards*

towards you, that ye always having allſufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work. As if he had ſaid, Be not afraid to give, nor ſparing in giving, for God (to whom you lend, when you give to the poor) is a good debter, a ſufficient paymaſter, and he will pay you, not only in your own, but in better coyne, than you lent: he will pay you in ſpiritualls for your temporalls, in grace for your gold, and that abundantly, both in the grace of his favour ſhining upon you, as alſo in the Graces of his Spirit working in you; yea, ye ſhall have, not only an All-ſufficiency in ſpiritual things, but in all things, which muſt needs include temporal things; even your Gold and Silver will multiply as Seed, by ſowing and ſcattering it abroad (as he alludes in the 9th verſe) ſo that ye ſhall (through this ability of God) be enabled to abound in every good work, that is, every good work of Grace, in generall; and if you are called to that ſpecial good work of Charity again and again, you ſhall be able to abound in every one of them. Some are doubtful, if they ſhould give freely and liberally, they ſhould loſe by it, and be ſtraitned themſelves: No, ſaith the Apoſtle, I avouch and engage the Almightineſs of God for it, if you be cheerful givers, God will ſhew his All-ſufficiency in giving you an All-ſufficiency in all things. Here are three or four *Alls*, promiſed to thoſe, who give but *ſomwhat* in a due manner. Here is, Firſt, *all grace*; Secondly, *All-ſufficiency*; Thirdly, in *all things*; and Fourthly, *always*; and all theſe grounded upon the mightineſs of God: *God is able.*

Sixthly, *God is mighty*: Then he can protect us from, ſupport us under, or deliver us out of all thoſe dangers, which we incurre for his Names ſake, (*Dan.* 3. 17.)

Secondly, Hence we may inferre matter of terrour to the wicked world, the ſons of *Belial*, the mightieſt enemies of God. What is the might of ſinful man, to the mightineſs of God! *The weakneſs of God is ſtronger than man*; what then is his mightineſs! We read (*Rev.* 6. 15.) how, *the* (Heathen) *Kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief Captains, and* (which may be the recapitulation of all theſe) *the mighty men, hid themſelves in Dens, and ſaid to the Mountains fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.* The Apoſtle checks the madneſs of the *Corinthians* in ſinning, by an intimation of the mightineſs of God,

againſt

against whom they sinned (1 *Cor.* 10. 22.) *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousie? Are we stronger than he?* As if he had said, What do ye mean? (he speaks to those that would venture to go to the Table of Devils, that is, who cared not how they mingled themselves, and held Communion, in the things of God, with those who worshipped Devil-gods, or (as all Idolaters do) Devils rather than God; what mean you (saith he to these) consider your selves, *Will you provoke the Lord? are you stronger than he?* are you his match? are you able to grapple with him? not so well as a Child with a mighty Giant, or a Lamb with a Lion. The mightiness of the Lord, his Almightiness, should make sinners tremble, and fear to provoke him; he can crush them as a Moth, and break them in pieces like a Potters Vessel. As 'tis the Joy of all true Believers, that God *hath laid help for them* (as 'tis said, Psal. 89. 19.) *upon one that is mighty*, that is, Christ, of whom *David* was but a shadow; and as 'tis the comfort of the *Fatherless*, (how weak soever) that *their Redeemer is mighty* (Prov. 23. 11.) So it may fill the faces of the wicked and presumptuous with confusion, and their hearts with despairing sorrow, to hear, that God, who is ready to take vengeance on them, is mighty; *Behold, God is mighty*; that's a glorious sight; and yet behold a sight more glorious, if more glorious may be,

And despiseth not any.

What a temperament is here? God is so mighty that he feareth none, no, not the mightiest, yet so meek, that *he despiseth not any*, no, not the meanest. *Elihu* having asserted the mightiness of God, amplifieth it, First, by his gracious condescension and moderation in the use of his mightiness; he is mighty, yet he doth not exercise his might in a proud vaunting or contemning way, *he despiseth not any*; that's the first thing, in which he amplifies the excellency of God in his mightiness. Secondly, As God is thus mighty, and moderate in the exercise of his might, not *despising any*; so behold another excellency of this might of God, He is mighty, not only in strength of Arm and Authority, but (as the last words of the verse set him forth)

In strength and wisdome;

Or, he is as wise as he is strong. Some men have a great deal of

of might, and they presently swell proudly, this spoyls all; others have a great deal of might, but not a bit of wit, or wisdome, or understanding, how to dispose or make the best of it: But what a mighty God have we to do with! who is mighty, and despiseth no man; who hath, not only might of strength, but might of wisdome too. Thus we see how *Elihu*, in this latter part of the verse, advanceth or extolleth the mightiness of God, in these two things, the infinite Moderation and Wisdome, that go along with it and act it. I shall a little open both. First, his wonderful Moderation in the exercise of his mightiness; *He is mighty,*

And despiseth not any.

To despise is an act of Pride; Pride is a bad Mother of many bad Children, these three especially. First, boasting of our selves. Secondly, contending with others. Thirdly, despising of others. The word here used signifies to despise with abhorrence or loathing, as the Stomack doth meat which is offensive to it; ill savoured meat is loathsome, and any thing which the mind nauseates, is an abhorrence to us. The *Lord despiseth not*, he doth not nauseate *any*. The word *any* is not exprest in the Original Text, that saith only, *The Lord is Mighty, and despiseth not*; we put that supplement in our Translation, *any*; *He is Mighty, and despiseth not any*. Others render more strictly, thus, *Behold, God is Mighty, and despiseth not his own people*. The Chaldee Paraphrase speaks exegetically, *The Lord is mighty, and despiseth not the righteous man*. The Greek Version hath a fourth supplement, to the same purpose, *God is mighty, and despiseth not the innocent person*, the man free from evill or wickedness; a man of integrity, a man of simplicity, the Lord will not despise: such are often afflicted, but never despised, especially not as such. Lastly, thus, *God is mighty, and despiseth not the mean, the afflicted, the poor*, or those of low estate, (*Psal.* 22. 24.) *He hath not despised, nor abhorred, the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath he hid his face from him, but when he cryed unto him, he heard.* And this seems most proper to the scope and meaning of *Elihu* here; 'God is mighty, and despiseth not those who have no might. Thus the words reflect chiefly upon *Job*, who at least seemed to charge God, that he did not consider him in his affliction, or in his low estate, when he complained and cryed to him. We have two Texts in this Book of *Job*, which

ולא ימאס

ἀκακον. Innocentem, simplicem integrum. Sept.

Est, quibus videatur nolle, quem non idco quia nolit. Merc.

might very well move *Elihu* to speak thus unto him; *though God be mighty, yet he despiseth not the afflicted, or the poor.* Job said (Chap. 10. 3.) *Is it good to thee that thou shouldst oppress, that thou shouldst despise the work of thy hands, and shine upon the Counsell of the wicked?* As if he had said to God, *Thou seemest to despise me, the work of thy hand, now that I am poor, low, and reduced, as it were, to dust.* Again (Chap. 19. 7.) we have neer the same language, *Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard, I cry aloud, but there is no Judgment.* As much as to say, I am despised and neglected, I am not regarded when I cry. This *Elihu* takes off in the present Text, *Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any*; he despiseth not the afflicted, nor the poor, when they cry unto, and call upon him; and therefore in this, O *Job*, thou hast misbehaved thy self, or spoken amiss.

But which-soever of these supplements we take, the sense is good, and the Proposition true, *he despiseth not*; what will he not despise? we say, not *any*; a second, *his own*; a third, *the Just*; a fourth, *the Innocent*; a fifth, *the afflicted* (there is a sixth, which I shall offer before I part with these words) All these are true, *God despiseth not.*

Hence Note;

First, *Though the Lord be infinitely more mighty than the mightiest of men, yet he doth not despise any man*;

He doth not despise man in general, who is the work of his hand; yea, *Job* said once (*Chap.* 14. 15.) *Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hand.* The Lord doth not despise any of his works, as they are his works, or as they come out of his hand; and therefore when *Jonah* seemed to set so low a rate upon the *Ninivites*, who were the work of his hand, his Creatures, the Lord reproved him for it, by the Gourd, which when the Lord smote, *Jonah* was angry; but said the Lord, *Dost thou well to be angry for thy Gourd?* Hast thou mercy upon a Gourd, and should not I spare this City, wherein are more than six score thousand persons, that know not their right hand from their left, and also much Cattle? The Lord did not despise, but pity them. Go through all the sorts of men, the Lord despiseth none; the Lord despiseth not great men, because great (which will come to a further consideration, upon another Translation of the Text) nor mean

mean men, because mean; he despiseth not men in prosperity, because they are rich and prosperous, nor doth he despise men in adversity, because poor and unprosperous. He despiseth not any upon any of these accounts; the Lord despiseth none but the wicked, and the ungodly, the unbeliever and the impenitent, and all them he despiseth, and them he ever will despise, how great, how high, how mighty, how rich soever they are; the Lord despiseth them, and he will alwayes despise them. He doth not despise any man because a great man, if he be not a wicked great man; and let men be never so poor or low, the Lord looks not disdainfully upon them because they are so; God doth not despise any man because he is in a bad case, he only despiseth men, because their case or Cause is bad, and then he will despise them, let them be who or what they will. Such is the goodness of God, and this goodness is his Glory, That although the highest and greatest of men, are but as worms to him, or not so much to him as the dust of the Ballance, or the drop of the Bucket, yet he despiseth not any, no, not the lowest and least of men.

Secondly, When the Text saith, *he despiseth not*, there is more in it than is expresst. We may take it affirmatively, God gives all sorts of men due regard and favour, he takes care of them, and bestows suitable mercies upon them, even upon the meanest and poorest of them: if they be his, if they be faithful and godly, how doth the Lord own them! how doth the Lord honour them! how doth the Lord embrace and lay them in his bosome, though they lye upon the Dunghil, as *Job* did! As *when we are warned not to despise the chastnings of the Lord* (Heb. 12. 5.) we are taught to take them in good part; and as when the Apostle admonisheth us (1 *Theff.* 5. 20.) *not to despise Prophesie*, his meaning is not only this, that he would not have us slight it, and throw it at our heels, but he would have us give it due esteem, and honour it as one of our choycest mercies, he would have us set a great price upon it, and bless God heartily for it. So here, when *Elihu* saith *The Lord despiseth not any*, his purpose is to shew, that he respects and favours men according to their condition, but most his own faithful and obedient Servants. This Interpretation may give us another Instruction:

God hath a due regard and respect to all sorts and conditions of men.

Having made all men, he doth not throw them up to the wide world, much less trample upon them himself; but owns them, preserveth them, watcheth over them all. And as for his special people, he tends them as a Nurse her infant, or as a Father tenders his children; he counsels them, he guides them, he directs and leads them, he supports and comforts them, he carries them through this world, as it were in his own armes, as the Eagle carries her young ones upon her wings. The Lord is a consuming fire to burn up the wicked, those that are unlike him, and like him not; but he is a warm Sun, to cherish, and a safe-guarding Shield, to protect those that fear him and trust in his Name: He indeed will be as a refining Fire, to fetch out and consume the dross that he sees in his people, and as a trying Fire (by affliction) to their Graces (as *Jobs* case was) But when he is so, and doth so, he is so far from despiting them, that he honours them, and makes them more honourable. And therefore having made Promise of being with his people when they should be called to walk through the fire (*Isa.* 43. 2.) he presently subjoyns, *(vers.* 4.) *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable.* As if he had said, Since thou hast given a proof that thou art good Metal, and that thou hast lost and left nothing in the fire of affliction, but thy dross, I both honour thee my self, and will cause others to honour thee also.

Pulcre Deus significat contemnens, quem in universi sibi assimilia decoratione contemnat; sed sibi similia complectitur. Brent.

Again, *He despiseth not any.* *Elihu* in this sets out the honour of God, he puts this as a Crown of Glory upon the head of his Power. *God is mighty, yet he despiseth not any.*

Hence Note;

To be mighty in Power, and meek in Spirit, shews an excellent God-like Spirit.

As God is great, so good; both are equally essential to him: goodness, gentleness, and meekness, meet together and are matcht with greatness and mightiness in God, (*Nahum* 1. 8.) *The Lord is great in Power, and slow to anger*; he is not presently in a flame with sinners, but waiteth to be gracious. *Fury is not in me,* (saith the Lord, *Isa.* 27. 4, 5.) I do not presently execute my power, because great in power. *Who would set the Bryars and Thorns against me in battel? I would go thorow them, and burn them together; or let him take hold of my strength, and make peace with*

with me, and he shall make peace with me. As if he had said, If sinners, of one sort or other, who are to me, or to my people, like Bryars and Thorns, vexing and troubling both me and them, should take the boldness to contend with me, I could quickly rid my hands of them, even as soon as fire can consume Bryars and Thorns fully dry; yet I rather advise them to humble themselves, and humbly make suit for peace, and they shall not find me inexorable, though I am invincible; they may have Peace for the asking, though I fear not at all the issue of the War. O that the mighty men of the World, would strive to imitate this overture of the mighty God: But oh how unlike are the most of the mighty men of this World to God!

First, Some mighty men of this World rather pride themselves that they can do hurt, than please themselves, that they may do good with their might. (*Psal.* 52. 1.) *Why boastest thou O mighty man, that thou canst do mischief?* that thou canst tread and trample upon others? this thy boast should be thy shame. Mighty men are apt to despise all men (upon the matter) that are below them, that are their underlings; but why dost thou boast, O thou mighty man, seeing (as it followeth in the *Psalm*) *the goodnesse of God* (who is mightier than thou) *endureth continually.*

Secondly, How unlike are they to God, who having might and power in their hand, despise the mean, and the oppressed, who come to them for Justice! Such are not like God, the Judge of all men, but like that Judge, whose Character was (*Luke* 18. 2.) *He feared not God, nor regarded man*; he despised all; what cared he for them, or their tears, so he might serve his own turn, and carry on his own ends? Woe to the mighty, who despise the Cause, much more who despise the cryes of the oppressed.

Thirdly, The mighty men of the earth usually despise those whom God honoureth most. God despiseth not any, but he highly esteemeth his own; whereas the mighty men of the World are apt to despise all, especially his, that is, the Generation of the righteous; they that are neareſt to Gods heart, are farthest from theirs. The affections and estimations of the mighty, seldome fall in with, but run cross to Gods, (*Psal.* 10. 3.) *He blesseth the Covetous, whom God abhors*; that is, he hath a high esteem of those, whom God cannot abide; and he that doth so, will never abide

abide those whom God highly esteems, and those least whom God esteems most highly; away (saith he) with those that are so strict in their way, away with them (saith he) that walk in the narrow way. O let such mighty ones as despise these, consider how unlike they are to the mighty God, who despiseth not any, who greatly honoureth these. *Michal, Davids* Wife, *Sauls* Daughter, had a piece of this spirit in her; though *David* was a mighty King, she despised him, only because he was a holy and a zealous King: When she saw how he danced before the Ark, when she saw how he was taken with the things of God, she despised him in her heart, and for that was punished with a barren womb, as long as she lived, (*2 Sam. 6. 23.*) They who act highest in holiness, are alwayes lowest in the thoughts of the unholy.

Fourthly, They that are mighty in Parts and Gifts of speech and knowledge, they who are got a Form higher than their Brethren, how apt are they to despise all that are below them! Nor is this the sin of carnal vain men only, but of many (for the main) good men also, who taking too much notice of their own great Abilities, will scarce take any notice of them who have but little. This dead Fly hath corrupted many a Box of precious Ointment; this Weed hath been found growing in the richest grounds; and the richer any ground is, the more apt it is to bring forth this Weed, unless the Lord, with those other Gifts, give also that which is more excellent than all Gifts, even than the Tongue, yea Head of men and Angels, an humble and self-denying heart. St *Paul* himself was in danger to be lifted up (and certainly had, if God had not given him preventing Physick) with this distemper, through the abundance of *Revelations*; now, he that is lifted up in himself, is within a step of despising others. And O how unlike are these in this also to God, who is mighty, not only in strength, but in wisdome, yet despiseth not any! And, that God who is mighty and despiseth not any, is mighty, not only in strength, but in wisdome, is *Elihu's* Assertion also concerning God, in the close of this verse, and comes next to be opened and handled.

He is mighty in strength and wisdome.

The Original may be thus rendred strictly; *He is mighty, the strength of heart*: Now, the strength of the heart consists, first, in courage;

courage; secondly, in wisdome; and hence we translate distinctly, *He is mighty in strength and wisdome.* Here are two poynts of Gods might according to our reading: He is mighty, First, in strength; Secondly, in wisdome. As before we had that Noble combination of Mightiness & Meekness in God, He is mighty and despiseth not any; so here we have another noble combination, in his mightiness, of strength and wisdome; *He is mighty in strength and in wisdome.* Some men are mighty in strength, who are weak in wisdome; others are mighty in wisdome, but not in strength; both meet and are joyned in God (in whom all things are but one, he being but an infinite simplicity, though they are acted diversly towards man, both these (I say) meet in God) and he equally excels in both.

Yet because, if these two be taken distinctly, we can understand nothing in God by strength, but what was comprehended in mightiness before spoken of, therefore I conceive, these words, *He is mighty in strength and wisdome*, signifie no more in this place than this, That God is mighty in the strength of wisdome, or that he is mighty strong in wisdome. And so I shall proceed with the Text.

This strength of the wisdome of God, or his strong wisdome, is of two sorts, or consists in a two-fold wisdome. First, there is his knowing and discerning wisdome. Secondly, there is his governing and disposing wisdome.

First, There is a strength of wisdome in knowing and discerning: God is mighty strong in this wisdome, in this knowing, this discerning wisdome, (*1 Sam. 2. 3.*) *The Lord is a God of knowledge, by him actions are weighed*; He knoweth our actions exactly, and he will weigh them to a grain, he knoweth our actions to the utmost. And as he knoweth our actions, so our intentions; he knoweth our inside as well as our outside, (*Heb. 4. 13.*) *All things are naked and manifest before him, with whom we have to do*; and they are not only naked to the skin, but unbowelled, and anatomized to every veine and bone, (*Acts 15. 18.*) *Known to God are all his works from the beginning of the world*; he knoweth all his own works, much more ours. Thus God is strong in wisdome, as wisdome consists in knowledge; and thus strong he is, he knoweth all things; First, the least things, as well as the greatest; 'tis no burden, no distraction to God, to take notice of the

the ſmalleſt matters, even to the numbering of the haires of our head. That's true greatneſs of knowledge, to know the leaſt things and motions of the meaneſt creature. Secondly, he knoweth the moſt ſecret things; *Secret things belong to God*, (*Deut.* 29. 29.) that is, God hath ſecrets which he reſerves to himſelf, man cannot know them, man muſt not attempt to know them, ſuch an attempt were inſufferable intruſion. Now as God hath ſecrets of his own, which no man muſt meddle with, ſo he medles with all our ſecrets, our ſecrets belong to God as well as his own; he knows the ſecrets of our hearts, he hath a key to that Cabinet, and can unlock it, and look into it; we may lock men, one and other, out of our hearts, but we cannot lock out God, he ſeeth what's there, ſuch is the ſtrength of his knowing wiſdome. Thirdly, He knows things future, or what ſhall be; he knoweth what as yet is not, as clearly as what is; *He declareth the end from the beginning*, (Iſa. 46. 10.) Upon this ground the Prophet challengeth all the Idols of the world, (*Iſa.* 41. 23.) *Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods*; tell us what ſhall be next, tell us what will be to morrow; that will be a demonſtration of your Divinity; the Lord declareth things to come, and he only declares them. We know little of that which is, he, and he only, knoweth that which will be. All futures unrevealed, are ſecrets, and among them our thoughts are the greateſt ſecrets, yet them the Lord knoweth, (*Pſal.* 139. 2.) *Thou* (ſaith *David*) *underſtandeſt my thoughts afar off*, that is, before I think them; Is not this ſtrength of knowing wiſdome? Fourthly, God knoweth all things alwayes, or everlaſtingly, there is not one of them ſlips out of his knowledge, they are at all times alike, that is, perfectly before him; Is not this alſo ſtrength of knowing wiſdome? Fifthly, The Lord knoweth all theſe things as diſtinctly as if he had but one thing to know. Sixthly, He knoweth all things by one act of ſingle and ſimple intuition, he doth not know (as we) by report from others, nor by comparing one thing with another, nor by inferring one thing from another, that is, he doth not know by diſcourſe, argument, or demonſtration, but all things are before the eye of his knowledge nakedly and immediately, as they are. Theſe two laſt as well as any of, or all the former, are a clear proof, not only, that God is knowing and wiſe, but that he is mighty in ſtrength of knowing wiſdome.

Secondly,

Secondly, Conſider wiſdome, as it is applyed in working. Some have much of that wiſdome which we call Theoreticall, knowing, diſcerning wiſdome; but as for practicall, working wiſdome, how to put things together, how to order them as to the buſineſſes and affairs of this life, they are very far to ſeek. We ſay, *Great Scholars are not alwayes the wiſeſt men*: many are knowing, they know almoſt all things, they will diſpute (*de omni ſcibili*) of all things knowable, yet are very weak when they come to lay things together for practice or government; if it be but the government of a family, or of their private eſtate, they know not how to mannage it, much leſs can they mannage the government of great Societies or Corporations, leaſt of all of Kingdomes and Nations. But as for the Lord, he hath not only a knowing wiſdome, but a diſpoſing, a governing, a working, practical wiſdome, in ordering all affairs, which we properly call prudence or diſcretion, (*Pſal.* 112. 5.) We have ſeen knowing learned men do things very fooliſhly, imprudently, indiſcreetly. But all the works of the Lord are contrived and model'd, as alſo effected and perfected with infinite wiſdome. Hence that Holy exclamation, (*Pſal.* 104. 24.) *O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wiſdome haſt thou made them all?* Which as it is true of all the works of Creation, ſo likewiſe of the works of Providence, the former of which are ſpoken of in the beginning of the Pſalme, and the latter in the following parts of it. The Lord in wiſdome made the world, *He made the heavens by his wiſdome*, (Pſal. 136. 5.) *and by wiſdome hath he founded the earth*, (Pro. 3. 19.) If in both thoſe places we underſtand Chriſt by wiſdome, it doth not hinder, but advance this truth; now as the Lord made the world both heaven and earth in wiſdome, ſo in and by the ſame wiſdome he governs heaven and earth, and all his works in both are full of wiſdome. Thus it appears that the Lord is mighty in ſtrength of wiſdome, both as to the knowing and ordering of all things: yea, the Lord is ſo mighty in both theſe kinds of wiſdome, that there is indeed none wiſe but he. And therefore the Scripture not only calls him, *The wiſe God*, but *God only wiſe*, (Rom. 16. 27. Jude *v.* 25.) And ſurely he is mighty ſtrong in wiſdome, who hath all the wiſdome, or is only wiſe. Some may ſay, How are we to underſtand that? is not wiſdome one of thoſe communicable Attributes of God? ſo we diſtinguiſh the divine Attributes, ſome are communicable,

nicable, others are incommunicable. The infiniteneſs, the omniſcience, the unchangableneſs, the ſimplicity of God are incommunicable, but the holineſs, the juſtice, the mercy and wiſdome of God, are communicable; that is, God doth communicate unto man his holineſs, his juſtice and wiſdome. Why then is it ſaid, *That God is only wiſe*, ſeeing God hath endowed many with a ſpirit of wiſdome, or hath made many wiſe men in the world?

I anſwer, Firſt, God is ſaid to be only wiſe, becauſe there is none ſo wiſe as he; his wiſdome is ſo much beyond the wiſdome of all men, that no man may be called wiſe but God. Thus alſo God is called *the only Potentate*, (1 Tim. 6. 15.) becauſe though there are many Potentates in the world, yet Gods potency is beyond them all. His life alſo is ſuch, that, at the 16th verſe of the ſame Chapter it is ſaid, *He only hath immortality*, yet both the Angels and the ſouls of men are immortal; but God hath immortality in a way of ſuch eminency, that the very Angels and ſouls of men are mortal in compariſon of him. *David* ſaid of his life, (*Pſal.* 39. 5.) *My age is nothing to thee*; I ſcarce live at all, when I conſider the life of God; ſo the wiſeſt man in the world may ſay of his wiſdome, my wiſdome is nothing unto thee, I have no wiſdome when I conſider how wiſe God is.

Secondly, God is ſaid to be only wiſe, becauſe there are none originally wiſe but he; his wiſdome is of himſelf, yea his wiſdome is himſelf; the wiſdome of God is not a ſeparable quality from him, as the wiſdome of a man is. Many are men, but not wiſe men; but it is impoſſible for God to be God, and not to be wiſe; his wiſdome is eſſential to him. The wiſdome of man is like gilding upon an earthen veſſel; but the wiſdome of God is like a golden veſſel. The wiſeſt men are gilded over with wiſdome, they are adorned and beautified with it, but no man, how wiſe ſoever is wiſdome, only God is. God is (if I may ſo ſpeak) an infinenſe and immeaſurable veſſel of gold, he is all gold, you cannot diſtinguiſh the gold from the veſſel, 'tis gold quite through, he is maſſie gold, maſſie wiſdome. The wiſdome of man is another thing from himſelf. The wiſdome of God is himſelf; and thus God alone is wiſe.

Thirdly, God *is only wiſe*, becauſe all wiſdome is from him; as he hath his wiſdome from himſelf, ſo all others have wiſdome from him; all the wiſdome of men and Angels, is but a ray from his light, but a ſtream, yea, but a drop from his Ocean. *Bezaliel's* Artificial wiſdome was from the Lord, *Solomons* political wiſdome was from the Lord; *Solomon* asked wiſdome from the Lord to governe. And not only is the wiſdome of Princes, Statſmen and Politicians, but the very Plowmans wiſdome is from the Lord, (*Iſa.* 28. 26.) where the Prophet having ſhewed how the Plowman tills the ground, how he harrows and caſts in the ſeed, how he threſheth and gets out the graine, he addeth (*v.* 29.) *This comes from the Lord, who is wonderfull in counſel, and excellent in working*. The Plowman knoweth not how to till his ground, to ſow his ſeed, to harrow his land, to threſh his corne, if the Lord did not give him wiſdome for it. Thus common wiſdome as well as political and ſpiritual wiſdome is of God, as *Daniel* confeſſed when the ſecret was revealed to him, (*Dan* 2. 21.) *He giveth wiſdome unto the wiſe, and knowledge to them that know underſtanding*. Seeing then all wiſdome is from God, we muſt confeſſe, *He is only wiſe*.

Fourthly, The Lord may be ſaid to be only wiſe, becauſe he is victoriouſly wiſe, his wiſdome is a conquering wiſdome, he conquers by his wiſdome as well as by his power; his wiſdome overthrows the wiſe men of the world, (*Prov.* 21. 30.) *There is no wiſdome, nor underſtanding, nor counſel againſt the Lord*. Many men will be taking and giving counſel againſt the Lord, but it ſhall not ſtand (*Iſa.* 8. 9.) He is only wiſe, who deſtroyeth the wiſdome of the wiſe, (1 *Cor.* 1. 19. 1 *Cor.* 3. 19, 20.) Thus the Lord is *mighty in ſtrength of wiſdome*, in knowing and diſpoſing wiſdome, diſcerning all things moſt clearly, and ordering all things moſt wiſely, according to the pleaſure of his holy and righteous will: and he is ſo wiſe in all theſe things, that he ought to be acknowledged and reverenced, as *the only wiſe God, or as God only wiſe*. Hence take theſe Inferences.

Firſt, If the Lord be mighty in ſtrength of wiſdome as well as in ſtrength of power, *then fear to do any thing amiſs* before him; he will ſpy out every fault; and the more you cover the faults, cracks and flawes in what you do, the more the Lord ſets himſelf to find them out; you cannot hide what you do from him, therefore take heed what you do.

Secondly, Is God mighty in ſtrength of wiſdome? *then do not find fault with any thing he doth, for he can do nothing amiſs*

The works of providence, whether they regard perſons or Nations, are done with as much exactneſs as the works of Creation were. In what beauty and order was the fabrick of this world ſet up at firſt in ſix dayes! It is called *Coſmos* in Greek, from the beautiful order viſible quite through it; and certainly, the works of providence are as orderly and perfect as the work of Creation, and ſo will appear at laſt, though now we ſee ſo many appearing confuſions, diſturbances, and tollings up and down: The Lord keeps order, how diſorderly ſo ever men are. The Lord doth all things in number, weight and meaſure. There is not one, the leaſt, ſlip, error or miſtake in what himſelf doth, nor in what he ſuffers men to do as to his own ends, how many errors and miſtakes ſoever there are in the wayes of men, or in the means which they uſe. Then take heed of picking holes in Gods work, much more of picking quarrels with his work. We are apt to find fault (where there is none) with what God doth, but how ſlow are we to find faults (where there are many) in our own doings!

Thirdly, Is the Lord mighty in ſtrength of wiſdome? then never be troubled, though you have mighty wiſe men againſt you; be not afraid, only labour to aſſure the mighty wiſe God for you. If you can but aſſure God, who is mighty in wiſdome for you, you need not be troubled, though mighty wiſe men are againſt you, though *Achitophels*, though *Matchevels*, though the Conclave of *Babylon* be againſt you: if the wiſdome of God be with us and for us, we are well enough, and ſhall do well enough, notwithſtanding the wiſdome of the world againſt us.

Fourthly, If God be mighty in ſtrength of wiſdome, then, when we want wiſdome, and know not what to do, or how to ſuffer, let us go to God; if we want wiſdome to mannage a proſperous eſtate, or to bear an afflicted eſtate, let us go to God. The Apoſtle gives this direction (*James* 1. 5.) *If any man lack wiſdome*, (he ſpeaks of a man in a troublous condition, in a time of temptation) *let him aſk of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.* God hath wiſdome enough for us, and can make us wiſe enough; apply to him, and you may be ſupplyed for all occaſions.

Fifthly, If God be mighty in ſtrength of wiſdome, then confidently caſt your care on him, put your all into his hand, (Pſal. 37. 5.) *Commit thy way to the Lord, truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſſe.* (Prov. 16. 3.) *Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed*; that is, thy thoughts about thy works, and uſually our thoughts are more unſetled than our works. When we have left a matter in the hand of a wiſe man, how confident are we, and how compoſed are our thoughts, as to the well-iſſuing of it! how much more may we be confident, and compoſed, when we have believingly left our matters in the hand of the only Wiſe God!

Sixthly, If the Lord be ſo mighty in Wiſdome, that he only is Wiſe, then beware of truſting to your own wiſdom, or of being wiſe in your own eyes. That's the counſel of *Solomon* the wiſe, (*Prov.* 3. 5.) *Lean not to thy own underſtanding.* We are apt to lean too much to the underſtanding of others; if we have ſuch a wiſe man to counſel us, we think all's ſafe, we are *Cock-ſure* (as we ſay) the work cannot miſcarry. 'Tis dangerous to lean to the underſtanding of others, but much more to lean to our own. Remember God is only Wiſe, and we never ſhew our ſelves more fools, than when we lean to our own wiſdome, or think to carry it by our own wit, and ſo depart from the wiſdome of God. Therefore be fools, be nothing in your own wiſdom, and you ſhall be wiſe with the wiſdome of God.

Thus I have proſecuted the Text according to our Tranſlation.

There is yet another reading as to both the parts of this 5th verſe, which I ſhall touch a little, becauſe they are much inſiſted upon by Learned Interpreters.

The former part of this verſe, which we render *Behold God is mighty, and deſpiſeth not any*, is thus rendred, *Behold God is mighty, and deſpiſeth not the mighty.* The vulgar Latine, thus, *God doth not caſt away the mighty, ſeeing he himſelf alſo is mighty.* The ſcope of this Tranſlation, is thus conceived. *Job* in the 29th Chapter of this Book, having ſet forth his own mightineſſe or greatneſs, complained in the 30th, that notwithſtanding all his former power and might, yet God had caſt him down, and laid him in the duſt. Here *Elihu* tells him, though God be mighty, yet he doth not deſpiſe the mighty; he doth not reject any man how high ſoever, becauſe he is high, nor the great, how great ſoever, becauſe great. God himſelf is great and mighty, *and they that are like, (uſually) rejoyce in thoſe that are like them.* Therefore God being

Ecce Deus potens, et non faſtidit potentes, robore cordis. Scult. *Deus potentes non abjecit, cum et ipſe ſit potens.* Vulg. *Ut hæc explicatio verbis Hebræis conveniat, vau, quod ſæpe fit, redundante veri popeſt.*

Ecce Deus potentem non fastidit, vel, Ecce Deus potens non fastidit. sc. potentem. Cum enim verbo illo accusativus addendus sit, satius est ex præcedenti. רביב Potentem repetere, quam objectum ex monte fingere. Sculr.

being mighty himself, doth not despise or reject those that are mighty, because they are so; there must be some other reason (it is not their mightinesse) why God despises and casts down the mighty. *God is mighty, and despiseth not the mighty.*

Hence Note.

The great God is no enemy to greatnesse.

Non potentia justa sed affectio prava damnatur. Greg. l. 26. c. 24.

God doth not despise the mighty, the Kings and Princes of the Earth, as they are such; he hath no antipathy in him against greatnesse, nor doth he reject any man because he is great; if he doth at any time reject a great man, it is because of the abuse of his greatnesse: God dislikes no mans just power, but the unjust exercise of that power. The Authority and Power of man over man is of God, therefore God doth not despise men because they are in power. He ordaineth Powers, *There is no Power but of God, the Powers that be, are ordained* (or as our Margin hath it, *ordered of God.*) He puts power into the hands of men, and disposeth of their power. God cannot despise his own Ordination. 'Tis the abuse of Power, and not the Power it self, which the Lord sets himself against, and that indeed he doth set himself against; he despiseth the most mighty and powerful Princes of the World, when they instead of governing, are only vexing others with their Power: This causeth him to *poure contempt upon Princes* (Psal. 107. 40.) and renders *him terrible to the Kings of the Earth* (Psal. 76. 12.) Yet the Lord is never so angry with, nor doth he so aggravate the faults of those that are in Power, as to make Power it self faulty. Indeed, when great and mighty men turn their Power into oppression, then the Lord speaks as if he had conceived a displeasure against all great and mighty men, yet he is not displeased with their greatnesse, but with the mis-improvement of their greatnesse, and mal-administration of their Power. The Prophet puts the Question (*Hab.* 3. 8.) *Was the Lord displeased against the Rivers? was thine anger against the Rivers? was thy wrath against the Sea?* What was the reason why God turned the River of *Nilus* in *Egypt*, into blood? What was the reason why God divided the Red Sea? Was he wrath with the River, or with the Sea? No, he was wrath with the great Ones of *Egypt*, his wrath was against *Pharoah* and the *Egyptians*. Such an expression we have (*Nahum* 1. 4.) *He rebuketh the Sea, and maketh it dry, and*

and dryeth up all the Rivers? Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the Flower of Lebanon languisheth. What was the meaning of all this? it only signified that the Lord was highly displeased with the great and mighty Ones of the world, who were to others, as the Sea is to a River, and as *Carmel* and *Lebanon* were to the Plains and low Valleys of the Earth, exceeding them in height and greatnesse; I say, he was highly displeased with them, because these carried it amiss in the exercise of their high Power; it was not because they were high and great, but because they had not exalted God in their highnesse, nor acted towards man as became those who were advanced above, and over other men. Thus all along the Lord speaks against, and rebukes the high and mighty, upon no other account but the unrighteous administration of their might & highness. God quarrels with no man meerly for his might.

The Historyes of all Ages have reported the great and mighty men of the World, opposing the mighty, purely because they were so. Some say they did it out of Reason of State; but the true Reason of it, usually was their own pride, or envy, because they could not bear those that were equal with them, as *Pompey*, much lesse a Superiour, as *Cæsar* could not. Or it was out of fear that the great would undermine their greatnesse, or bring them down. Thus mighty men oppose the mighty, as mighty; but the Lord is infinitely above these thoughts, *He is mighty, and he despiseth not the mighty*, nor doth he set himself against them, because they are mighty. *The liberal* (Isa. 32. 8.) *deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand.* *David* a great Prince, prayed (*Psal.* 51. 12.) that God would *establish him by his free* (or Princely) *Spirit*; that being a mighty King, he might never any more entertain low and unworthy thoughts of any man, nor do any thing unworthy of God, or of himself.

Superbia parem non fert.

Magnificum magnificentias cogitabit. Heb.

Maximus virtute cordis. Coc. גביר כח לב Potens est robore cordis, i.e. valet animi præstantia, est magni animi ergo opera manuum suarum non contemnit. Marc.

Again, Our Translation distributes the latter part of the verse into two Branches of the mightinesse of God. *He is mighty*, first, *in strength*; and secondly, *In wisdome*. This, by others, is rendred a single Proposition. *He is mighty in strength of heart.* Strength of heart may be taken three wayes: First, For courage in dangers. Secondly, For patience in troubles. Thirdly, For noblenesse and greatnesse of mind, in all we do. In this third or last sense, we are to understand it here; as if *Elihu* had said, *The Reason why the Lord being mighty, doth not despise the mighty, is this*

this, Becauſe he excels all others, not only in mightineſs and power, but in the nobleneſs of his Spirit. The Lord hath ſuch an heroical Spirit, that he can do nothing below or unbecoming himſelf. This is an excellent reading of the words. Take two Notes from it. Firſt, By way of Aſſertion. Secondly, By way of Illation. By way of Aſſertion, thus,

The Lord hath a wonderful noble heart, and magnificent Spirit.

He hath not only an outward power (as many have) but an inward power; he is not only *Maſter of others*, but, as I may ſay, he is *Maſter of himſelf*. Many are Maſters of others, who are not at all Maſters of themſelves; they are mighty in the ſtrength of hand, yet weak as to ſtrength of heart. The inward excellency and mightineſſe of the heart of God, may be ſeen eminently in a threefold reſpect.

First, The Lord is mighty of heart, as to patience and long-ſufferance, in bearing with thoſe that are evil. The Lord is infinitely above that patience which conſiſts in the bearing of evil, (though that as was toucht before, ſhews much ſtrength of heart) but he is continually in the exerciſe of that patience, which conſiſts in bearing with thoſe that are evil. And O how great is the ſtrength and might of Gods heart in this! Some of the Rabbies tranſlate the Original Text, *long-ſuffering*. The Prophet *Nahum* ſpeaks of God, *as ſlow to anger, and great in power*, (Chap. 1. 3.) It argueth ſtrength of heart indeed, when we can ſtop and bridle our boiſterous and angry paſſions, towards thoſe that have offended us. The Lord ſaith unto, or concerning *Pharoah* (Exod. 9. 16.) *And in very deed, for this cauſe have I raiſed thee up, for to ſhew in thee my power*, &c. What power? The Lord ſhewed forth a twofold power in the raiſing up of *Pharoah*: Firſt, the power of his Arm, that he was able to caſt down ſuch a mighty Prince. Secondly, The power of his Patience, that he ſpared him from ruin till he had ſent ten meſſages to him, and poured ten Plagues upon him. The Lord was ſo provoked by *Pharoah*, that he might have cruſhed him upon the firſt denyal, but he forbare him long; the Lord might well ſay, *I have ſet thee up that I might ſhew forth my power, my power in forbearing thee long, as well as in deſtroying thee at laſt.* The Apoſtle ſpeaks of this power (Rom. 9. 22.) *What if God*

חכ.לב
μακροθυμια.

God willing to ſhew his wrath, and make his power known (the Lord will not only ſhew his wrath hereafter in breaking thoſe veſſels of deſtruction, but he ſhews his power now in ſuffering them long, and therefore he to make his power known) *endured with much long-ſuffering the Veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction.* Here's the ſtrength of the Lords heart, he bears long with wicked men.

Secondly, There is a mighty power or ſtrength of heart in God, as in long-ſuffering towards impenitent ſinners, ſo in pardoning ſinners who repent. Who, but the Lord hath ſuch a ſtrength of Spirit, to pardon and paſſe by offences! After the People of *Iſrael* had mutined, and murmured, and ſo provoked the Lord to the height, *Moſes* begs and beſpeaks the power of the Lords pardoning-mercy, (*Numb.* 14. 17.) *And now I beſeech thee let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou haſt ſpoken, ſaying, The Lord is long-ſuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity*, &c. As if *Moſes* had ſaid, *Lord, thou muſt put forth as much power in pardoning the ſins of this People, as ever thou didſt in delivering them from their bondage-ſufferings in Egypt.* Or thus, *O Lord, thou mighteſt magnifie the power of thine anger in puniſhing this rebellious People, but rather magnifie the power of thy patience and long-ſufferance in ſparing and pardoning them.* O what ſtrength of heart is in God, who paſſeth by the great tranſgreſſions of his People!

Magni animi eſt ignoſcere. Solis ſublimia et excelſa virtus eſt, nec quicquam magnum, niſi quod ſimul placidum. Sen.

Thirdly, The Lord hath a mightineſſe of heart in executing his wrath upon his incorrigible enemies, (*Pſal.* 90. 11.) *Who knoweth the power of thine anger?* The anger of God is ſuch a thing as no man can go to the bottome of it in his thoughts. The Lords wrath is powerful, beyond all imagination and apprehenſion; his anger, as well as his love, paſſeth knowledge. In all theſe reſpects the Lord hath ſtrength of heart, or he is mighty in ſtrength of heart, as well as in hand or arm. The greateſt diſcoveries of Gods power, are in the wayes of his mercy. His Judgements are called his ſtrange work, but his mercy is his ſtrength, as the Prophet calls it, (*Iſa.* 27. 5.) where warning *the Bryars and Thorns* to take heed of warring with God, he gives a ſinner this counſel, *Let him take hold of my ſtrength, that he may make peace with me, and he ſhall make peace with me.* But what is meant by the ſtrength of God? Some render, *Let him take hold of my Tower.* A *Tower* is a place of ſtrength, but here put for that

Apprehendet arcem meam, i. e. Chriſtum.

which God glories in moſt, as his chiefeſt ſtrength, even his goodneſſe, mercy, patience, and long-ſufferance, yea Chriſt himſelf; as if he had ſaid, *Let not the ſinner ſtruggle with my ſtrength, let him not think by ſtrong hand to overcome my ſtrength, but let him take hold of my Chriſt, through whom all theſe glorious perfections of mine, my Goodneſſe, Mercy, Patience, &c. are given out to the children of men, and he ſhall make peace with me.* This is the true ſtrength of God; nor doth any thing more ſet forth the ſtrength of man, than this, that he is ready to pardon, to forgive, and paſſe by; only impotent ſpirits are much for revenge. 'Tis our weakneſſe not to paſſe by wrongs and injuries done to us. To bear wrongs is to be like the high and mighty God, to bear them in mind, is to be like the loweſt and weakeſt ſpirited men. He is ſtrong indeed, who is ſtrong in patience againſt Offenders, and as ſtrong in mercy to pardon humble ones, as in power to puniſh ſtubborn and rebellious ones.

Secondly, By way of Illation,

Note.

'Tis the greatneſs of Gods Spirit, or the ſtrength of his heart and mind, which moderates him towards ſinful man.

That which keeps men in a moderate frame towards men, is true greatneſſe of ſpirit: They that are of ſuch a ſpirit, will neither deſpiſe thoſe that are below them, nor envy thoſe that are above them, nor willingly oppoſe thoſe that are equal to them. The envy and oppoſition of others greatneſſe, ariſeth from the meanneſſe and weakneſſe of our own ſpirits. The reaſon why one man is affraid that another ſhould be high, is becauſe himſelf hath not a real highneſſe of ſpirit; or the reaſon why moſt oppoſe the greatneſſe of others, is the littleneſſe of their own ſpirits. Whence ſpring contentions and ſtrifes, envyings at, and underminings of one another? come they not from the narrowneſſe of our hearts, that we cannot rejoyce in the good of others, or from the impotent jealouſies of our hearts, that we fear others will do us hurt? If ſuch a one get up, he will pull me down; if ſuch a one be high, 'tis dangerous to me, therefore I muſt pull him down, if I can; whence comes this, but from lowneſſe and poorneſſe of ſpirit, from that pitiful thing in man, called *Puſillanimity*. The Lord hath ſo great a Spirit, that as he envieth no mans greatneſſe, ſo

ſo he feareth no mans greatneſs, and therefore doth that which is juſt and equal to all ſorts of men, bad and good, as is further ſhewed in the next verſe.

Verſ. 6. *He preſerveth not the life of the wicked, but giveth right to the poor.*

As if *Elihu* had ſaid, *Though the Lord doth not deſpiſe any that are great, yet he doth not reſpect any that are bad; he preſerveth not the life of the wicked. And as the Lord will not do any wrong to the rich, ſo, to be ſure, he will give right to the poor.* What *Elihu* had affirmed of God, he now proveth by inſtances or particulars, and that both in reſpect of the wicked and the godly. That the Lord is moſt juſt and righteous he proveth thus,

He preſerveth not the life of the wicked.

That's the firſt inſtance, and he expreſſeth it negatively, *He preſerveth not the life of the wicked, he maketh not, or ſuffereth not the wicked to live.* The Hebrew ſtrictly is, *He doth not enliven the wicked:* So the word is uſed concerning the Midwives that feared God, (*Exod.* 1. 17.) *They did not obey the word of the King, but ſaved the Male Children alive,* or, *they enlivened the Male children. They who preſerve, do, upon the matter, give a new life.* The like Expreſſion we have (*Exod.* 18. 22.) *Thou ſhalt not ſuffer a Witch to live:* The Hebrew is, thou ſhalt not vivifie or enliven a Witch. They who have commerce with the Devil, the *Prince of the Air*, they who Trade with Hell, to ſatisfie the luſts and curioſities of evill men on earth, are not worthy to breath in the Air, or live upon the face of the Earth. *He preſerveth not the life of the wicked.* There are two things in this negative ſpeech of *Elihu*.

לא יחיה: Non vivificat.

Firſt, God doth not ſhew any favour to, nor indulge wicked men in their evil wayes. He that will not ſo much as preſerve their lives, doth not give them favour while they live. Life and favour are two diſtinct things, (*Job* 10. 12.) *Thou haſt granted me life and favour.* Favour with life is the priviledge of the living; favour is better than life. The Lord doth but ſeldome reprieve, much leſs doth he at any time favour or pardon impenitently wicked men.

Secondly, When *Elihu* ſaith, *he preſerveth not the life of the*

Non vivificat impios, pro interfecit, et omni vita spoliat. Coc.

wicked, we are to understand it by an ordinary Figure, wherein less is expressed, than is to be understood; *He preserveth not*, that is, first, he is not solicitous about their preservation, he cares not much what becomes of them; and not only so, but Secondly, he destroyeth the life of the wicked; the Lord will certainly ruine and utterly undoe them, one time or other, one way or other; he will do it either immediately, by his own Arme, by some notable stroke of vengeance from himself: or he will do it by means, he will find out, and impower instruments, that shall destroy the very life of the wicked. And I conceive *Elihu* brings in this Proposition concerning God, in answer to what *Job* had observed and complainingly alleadged about the Prosperity of the wicked, (*Chap.* 21. 7.) *Wherefore doth the wicked live, become old, yea are mighty in power?* As if *Job* had intimated, that the Lord surely did shew, not only some, but much respect unto wicked men; they did not only live, but they lived a long time, and not only a long time a bare life, but were mighty in power, and over-powered, yea, oppressed many with their might. *Elihu* replyeth here, notwithstanding this Allegation (which seemed to reflect upon the Justice of God) that *the Lord preserveth not the Life of the wicked*. Mark, first, he doth not say, *he preserveth not the Life of a man that sinneth*, for then whose life should be preserved? but,

רשׁע *he preserveth not the life of the wicked*; that is, of a man who sinneth presumptuously, and goeth on impenitently, who is incorrigible. Secondly, he doth not say, God suffereth not a wicked man to live, for then (most men being wicked in all Ages of the world) the world would be very thin, and almost naked, of Inhabitants: But *he preserveth not* (saith he) *the life of the wicked*; that is, he sets no store by them, as we do of those things, which we carefully preserve. We may compare this verse with that of *Job* (Chap. 34. 26, 27, 28.) where 'tis said of mighty oppressors, the Lord *striketh them as wicked men* (that is, as he useth to strike wicked men) *in the open sight of others; because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his wayes: So that they cause the cry of the poor to come up to him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted.* Now, as there *Elihu* speaks affirmatively, *he striketh wicked men*, so here he speaks negatively (which is the same in effect) *God doth not preserve the life of the wicked*: and as there he said, *God heareth the cry of the afflicted, or poor*, so here, *he*

he giveth right to the poor. These Texts are of the same sence, and expound each other. From the former part of this sixth verse already opened, *he preserveth not the life of the wicked*,

Observe, First;

Wicked men are out of Gods Protection, they can expect no favour from him;

They are out-lawed. Some persons are out-lawed by men, and then if any man injure them, or kill them, they can have no remedy by the Law; they have their amends (as we say) in their own hands, the Law gives them none. Wicked men are out of Gods love, and therefore out of his care; he turns them up (as we say) to the wide World to shift for themselves: whether they sink or swim, 'tis all one to him. He is neither Sun nor Shield to the wicked, he is both to the godly, (*Psal.* 84. 11.) *The Lord is a Sun and a Shield, the Lord will give Grace and Glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.* As a Sun he giveth out the warm Beams of his favour, to refresh and revive them, when the World leaves them cold and comfortless: And as a Shield he defends and saves them, when the World strikes at them and vexes them; he will keep them safe from evil, as with a Shield. The wicked have no share in this, nor in any such-like promise; the Lord is rather Fire and Sword, than Sun or Shield to them; he neither comforts them while they live, nor preserves their lives from death.

But some may say, Doth not God preserve the lives of the wicked? Is it not said (*Job* 7. 20.) *He is the preserver of men?* Which indefinite seems to carry it for all men: And (*Psal.* 36. 6.) *Thou preservest man and beast.* Yea, wicked men not only live, but prosper and flourish in the World, as *Job* complained, (*Chap.* 21. 7.) *Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?* Surely then they are preserved, and if God do not preserve them, who doth? Man hath no more power to preserve his own life, than to give himself life; how is it then that the Text saith, God doth not preserve them? or that they are out of Gods Protection?

I answer, First, It cannot be denyed, but that the wicked hold their lives, and all the good things they have (possibly they have many good things) of God. But the wicked, and their lives,

or the lives of the wicked, are preſerved only by that common Providence of God, which extends even to the Beaſts of the field; they are not preſerved by any ſpecial Providence or Promiſe of preſervation made to them: their *Souls are not bound in the bundle of life with the Lord their God*, as *Abigail* aſſured *David* his ſhould be (1 *Sam.* 25. 29.) nor are they, as one very well expreſſeth it in the Language of the Prophet *Iſaiah* (Chap. 4. 3.) *written* (or reckoned) *among the living in Jeruſalem.* Neither their life, nor their death, is precious in the Lords ſight, as both of the meaneſt Saints are (*Pſal.* 116. 15.) The ſpecial Promiſes of preſervation are made to the godly; the common Providences of preſervation extend to the wicked. God preſerves many wicked men, but not one of them can plead a Promiſe for his preſervation, or ſay, Lord, thou haſt undertaken to preſerve me, I have thy Word or Warrant for my preſervation. So then, the Lord doth not preſerve the life of any wicked man upon a word of Promiſe.

Secondly, I anſwer, When the lives of the wicked are preſerved, they are not preſerved for any love which God bears to their perſons as ſuch, but either, Firſt, to bring them into a better ſtate, that is, to turn them from their wickedneſs, that being converted, they may be ſaved at laſt, according to his purpoſe: Or, Secondly, they are preſerved, to ſerve ſome ends and purpoſes of his in this World. For though God hath no pleaſure in them, yet he makes ſome uſe of them, and doth his pleaſure by them; Or, I may ſay, they are preſerved to be Executioners of his diſpleaſure, in chaſtening and correcting his own people. The King of *Aſſyria* was preſerved in great Power; and to what end? *I will ſend him againſt an hypocritical Nation,* (Iſa. 10. 6.) He muſt go on my Errand, though *he meaneth not ſo, nor doth his heart think ſo,* (as the Lord ſpake, verſ. 7.) He hath other matters and deſigns in his head, but I have this uſe of him, and of his power, even to puniſh *the people of my wrath.* The Lord made uſe alſo of *Nebuchadnezzar*, and his Army, to ſerve him in the deſtroying of *Tyrus*, and of him and his Army he ſaith, *They wrought for me,* (Ezek. 29. 20.) Thus the Lord doth ſome of his work, his ſtrange work eſpecially, his work of Judgment, by the hands of wicked men; and therefore he preſerves their lives. Yea, he preſerves them many a time to be a help and a defence to his people.

A

A Thorn Hedge keeps the Paſture, that ſtrange Cattle break not in, and eat it up. Wicked men are as Bryars and Thorns, and they are ſuffered to live, becauſe the Lord can make uſe of them as a Fence to his people. When *the Serpent caſt out of his mouth water as a Flood after the woman* (the Church) *that he might cauſe her to be carryed away of the Flood*, then *the Earth* (that is, earthly, carnal men) *helped the Woman* (Rev. 12. 15, 16,) The Lord uſed bad men to do that good work, the preſervation of his diſtreſſed and perſecuted Church.

Thirdly, As the Lord ſuffers many wicked men to live, that they may be brought out of their ſins, ſo he ſuffers others to live that they may fill up the meaſure of their ſins. Why did the Lord preſerve the *Amorites*? was it becauſe he loved or liked them? no, but becauſe they were not then ripe for Judgment, (*Gen.* 15. 16.) *The Iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.* Some wicked men are to fill up their dayes, that they may fill up the meaſure of their Fathers ſins, by their own, as Chriſt threatned the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, (Math. 23. 32.) Such a grant of life, though for a thouſand years, is worſe than a thouſand Deaths.

Fourthly, we may anſwer, The wicked are not ſo much preſerved from, as reſerved unto further wrath, (2 *Pet.* 2. 9.) *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reſerve the unjuſt unto the day of Judgment, to be puniſhed.* God doth not preſently puniſh all the wicked, nor take away their lives; there is a day of Judgment coming, and till that day come, their lives are preſerved, as perſons reſerved unto Judgment.

Fifthly, When wicked men are ſaid to be out of the Lords Protection, conſider, There is a twofold Protection; Firſt, ordinary; Secondly, extraordinary. The Lord doth preſerve and protect wicked men in an ordinary, not in an extraordinary way; he doth not work wonders, much leſs miracles, to preſerve them, as he often doth for the preſervation of his own people. God will not be at ſuch coſt in preſerving of wicked men, as he is at in the preſerving the lives and liberties of his eminent Servants; rather than they ſhall periſh, or not be preſerved, he will ſometimes work a miracle, and put Nature out of its courſe, to ſave their lives. When thoſe three Worthies were caſt into the midſt of the burning fiery Furnace, God ſtopt the rage of that furious Element, that *the Fire had no power upon their bodyes, nor*

was

was an hair of their head singed, neither were their Coats changed, nor the smel of fire had passed on them, (Dan. 3. 27.) Did we ever hear that the Lord restrained the power of the fire, to preserve wicked men? When *Daniel*, a man precious in the sight of God, was cast into the Lions Den, the Lord preserved his life also, by stopping the Mouths of the Lyons, (*Dan.* 6. 22.) Did we ever hear that God preserved the lives of wicked men in such a way? No sooner were *Daniels* accusers cast into the Lyons Den, but the Lyons had the Mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces, e're ever they came to the bottome of the Den, (*v.* 24.) The Lord doth not preserve the lives of the wicked, by miraculous manifestations of his Power and Glory.

Sixthly, I answer, Though some wicked men are commonly preserved, as other men, yet many by their wickedness, hasten their ruine, and shorten the number of their dayes. We may distinguish of wicked men; First, wicked men may be taken in a General notion, for all that are unconverted, and unregenerate. Many persons pass for honest and good men in the world, who yet are wicked, being carnal, and abiding in a state of nature: wicked men of this sort, are ordinarily preserved. Secondly, Take wicked men (and such I conceive the Text especially intends) for notorious wicked men, such as are murderers, blasphemers, *&c.* the Lord doth not preserve the lives of such, but lets mans Justice seize upon them, or divine vengeance overtake them (*Psal.* 55. 23.) *The blood-thirsty and deceitful man shall not live out half his dayes*; that is, he shall not live half so long as he might, according to the course of Nature, because of his nefarious sinful courses. Histories are full of dreadful Tragedies, sealing to this Truth, with the blood and untimely death of gross offenders. How often have we seen or heard of the Vengeance of God following and falling upon those that were (*signanter*) notoriously wicked; and of these we are especially to understand the Poynt and Text, *He preserveth not the life of the wicked.* Take this Inference from all that hath been said about this awakening Observation,

How sad is the life of a wicked man! indeed of any man on this side the Line of grace, but especially of any very wicked man! He can scarce be said to live, whose life is not preserved by God; a wicked man is alwayes in death, seeing God doth not preserve his life. The Apostle *Paul* said he was *in Deaths often*, but

but God had as often preserved his life; but they are in Deaths alwayes, whose life God never preserveth. What preservation of life can he have, who hath not God for his preserver? God in Creation or Propagation giveth us our life as to being; but Preservation gives us our life as to well-being. Can it be well with them that are not under the preservation of God? To be redeemed by Christ would be but a small comfort, unless we were also preserved by him. (*Jude* 1.) *To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.* If we were only redeemed from death, and not preserved in life, what were our spiritual life to us? So I may say in respect of the life of the body; to be meerly created or propagated, what is it, if we are not preserved? 'Tis a high Priviledge, when a man can, not only say, he hath received life from God, but his life is preserved by God. That's the first poynt. *He preserveth not the Life of the wicked.*

Again, From that other Interpretation of the words, as not to preserve is as much as to destroy and ruine,

Note,

As God utterly disowneth, so he will at last utterly ruine all wicked men.

He not only doth not favour them, but *pours out fury upon them*, (Jer. 10. 25.) *Powr out thy fury upon the Heathen that know thee not, and upon the Families that call not on thy Name.* The Prophesie of *Isaiah* speaks no better concerning them than that prayer of *Jeremy.* (*Isa.* 3. 11.) *Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hand shall be given him.* And what can the hand of a wicked man earn? the wages of sin is death; he can get nothing but wrath, and death, nothing but tribulation and anguish here, and eternal misery hereafter, by the work of his hands. VVoe to the wicked, for the reward of his hands shall be given him, that is, eternal destruction and sorrow shall be given him, according to the iniquity of his hand. A godly man is rewarded according to the cleanness of his hands (*Psal.* 18. 20, 24.) He labours to keep his hands, (much more his heart clean, whatever the VVorld judge of him) But woe to the wicked when God giveth them the reward of their hands, of their unclean, foul and filthy hands; for what can such hands get or procure by all their

labour but their own mischief and sorrow? *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked,* (Isa. 57. 21.) No peace is to them, because no good is done by them: their portion lyes in promises, who keep Commandements, so theirs must needs lye in threatnings, who do nothing but break them, or break them in all they do. *My meditation of him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord,* (said *David*, Psal. 104. 34.) As if he had said, I know that I and every Godly man, shall receive so much good from the Lord, that it doth me good at the heart to think of it: But as for the wicked, I can fore-see (as we say) with half an eye, how ill it will be with them, and so let it be; I must subscribe to, and vote with the righteous judgement of the Lord against them (*ver.* 35.) *Let the sinners be consumed out of the Earth, and let the wicked be no more.*

Lastly, Consider these words, *He preserveth not the life of the wicked,* with respect to the wicked, specially intended and treated of in this Context, *The Lord is mighty, and despiseth not the mighty* (because they are mighty) *he preserveth not the wicked.*

Hence Note;

Wicked men, how mighty soever, cannot preserve themselves, nor doth the Lord undertake for their preservation.

The strongest of wicked men, cannot stand by their own strength, they cannot protect nor preserve themselves, and the Lord will not put forth his strength to preserve them from falling. As no mightiness, no power can bear man up, or maintain him against the Lord, so not without the Lord; if he preserveth not the life of the wicked, they cannot escape death and destruction, though high as Cedars, and strong as Oakes. They cannot but perish, whom God preserveth not. *He preserveth not the life of the wicked,*

But giveth right to the poor.

עניים *Pauperes afflicti.*

Or *to the afflicted.* Poverty it self is a great affliction, and usually the poor are afflicted by others. Here is a second instance of Gods goodness in the exercise of his power and might. As *He preserveth not the life of the wicked,* So *he giveth right to the poor;* as he destroyeth wrong-doers, so he will do right to those that suffer wrong. Every word is considerable, First, *He giveth*; that's

that's an act of bounty. Secondly, *He giveth right*; that's an act of equity. And that Thirdly, *To the poor*; that's an act of pity and charity.

Further, When 'tis said, *He giveth*, that implyes, First, a present or speedy act; Secondly, a constant and setled course of acting. As the word *giveth* imports, that the Lord doth it now, and doth not put it off to hereafter only; so it likewise importeth that the Lord will do it hereafter, as well as now. *He giveth*

Right to the poor.

משפט The poor suffer wrong, but the Lord comes, and gives them *right*, or rights them, and that in a twofold notion. First, He gives them that right which is due to them, according to his own righteous Laws, or the righteous Laws of men. That's right done, which is done according to a righteous Law. Secondly, He giveth them that right which is due to them according to the integrity of their own hearts and wayes. We may say, Thirdly, The Lord giveth them right, not according to the strictnesse of the Law, but according to the integrity of their hearts. Thus *David* prayed (*Psal.* 7. 3.) *Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousnesse, and according to mine integrity that is in me*; that is, according to my honest meaning, and the simplicity of my Soul. As if he had said, *O Lord, do me right; men have done me wrong, they have false and wrong apprehensions of me, they raise false reports concerning me, but thou, O Lord, who knowest my integrity wilt judge me accordingly, and 'tis my humble and earnest Prayer that thou wouldest. He giveth right*

To the poor.

The poor in Scripture are taken two wayes; First, as they stand in opposition to the rich; Secondly, as they are opposed to the proud; thus here, he giveth right to the poor, as well as to the rich; and he will especially give right to the humble poor, to the righteous poor, to the poor in spirit. Such the Prophet speaks of (*Isa.* 66. 2.) *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor.* He means not the poor in purse (as such) he means not those (as such) who wear poor cloaths, the Lord doth not always look to, or respect such poor, for many such are both proud and wicked; but he looks to him that is poor in spirit, or of a *contrite spi-*

rit; let such be in Rags, and lye upon the Dunghil, the Lord will look to them; and he hath a threefold look for them. First, A look of honour, as respecting their Persons. Secondly, A look of care, to supply their wants. Thirdly, A look of justice, to deliver them from wrong. And if they that are poor in spirit, be rich also in the world, they shall not fail to receive right from the hand of the Lord. The Lord giveth right to all sorts of men against their wicked oppressors; but his poor, the Godly poor, believing poor, those that are poor not only in purse, but in spirit, are more peculiarly under this priviledge, of being righted by the Lord. And usually in Scripture, the word *poor* is taken in a good sence, for good men, as the word *rich*, in an ill sence, for evil men (*Jam.* 5. 1.) *Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you.* The Apostle speaks as if that were the case of all rich, or as if he called all rich men to weeping and howling, *&c.* Yet some poor men are wicked, and some rich men are righteous; and therefore I conceive the word *poor* may be taken here for any wronged or oppressed poor, yet especially for the Godly poor. For though God giveth right to all men, even the worst of men, yet here the scope of *Elihu* is to shew that God takes most care of those whom the wicked do most, not only neglect, but injure and oppresse, *He giveth right to the poor.*

Nomen pauperum in bonam sumitur, pauperes sunt populus Dei.

Hence Note;

The poor, especially the Godly poor, are often wronged, and go by the worst in the world. Or thus:

The poor, as poor, usually suffer from, and by the world.

As the world is apt to oppresse any poor, so mostly the Godly poor, (*Psal.* 12. 5.) *For the oppression of the poor I will arise.* 'Tis possible a rich man may be oppressed, a mighty man may be oppressed by one mightier than he; but usually the poor are oppressed, and they trampled on, who are already underfoot. And therefore the Lord saith, *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, and set him at safety from him that puffeth at him.* This is not exclusive, the Lord will arise for the help of the rich and great, when any such are wronged; but he is said to arise for the help of the poor, as intimating that the poor seldome come by their right, or find help in the world, unlesse God

God arise to help them, or help them to it; and because he hath said he will help them to their right, we may be sure he will. *Davids* Faith was strong upon this promise, (*Psal.* 18. 27.) *Thou wilt save the afflicted people,* (Psal. 72. 4.) *He shall judge the poor of the People.* (Psal. 140. 12.) *I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted.* And his Experience was as clear, as his Faith was strong (*Psal.* 37. 25.) *I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken*; that is, I have often, yea alwayes seen him helped one way or other; and sometimes *set on high from affliction,* (Psal. 107. 41.) The Lord careth so for the poor, as if he cared for none else; and the best of the poor are little cared for by any, but the Lord. (*Zeph.* 3. 12.) *I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the Name of the Lord.* The rich of this world trust to creature helps, but as the Lords poor know they ought not to trust in creature help, so they have it not to trust to, and therefore they trust in the Name of the Lord, not only out of choice (which is their grace and duty) but out of necessity. And what will the Lord do for them that trust in him, not only out of necessity but choice? he will surely take care of them, and do them right.

Secondly, Note;

God rights the poor freely.

He giveth them right, he doth not sell it. What freer than gift? They need not bribe for it. As he freely giveth them the Righteousnesse of his Son to justifie them, so they have common right of free gift to relieve them.

Note Thirdly;

The Lord relieves, or rights the poor speedily.

He giveth, implyeth a present act, and that doubles the mercy.

Note Fourthly;

God will always right the wronged poor.

He giveth, imports even a continued act; as he did it in former times, in the dayes of old, so he doth it at this day, and will do it always. As the Lord giveth right speedily, so constantly, with him is no variableness or shadow of turning. Most men do right

right only by fits, but the Lord is ever giving right.

Lastly, *He giveth right to the poor*, not to this, or that poor man, but to the poor.

Hence Note;

The Lord distributes right to all that are wronged.

As his Mercy, so his Justice is not confined to a few, but floweth out to all.

But it may be objected, *If thy then are so many poor without their right? If the Lord giveth right, and giveth it continually, and impartially, why do the poor cry, and sigh, and groan, and mourn? why see we so many tears of the poor? If they have right, why do they complain?*

I answer,

First, The Lord giveth right to the poor, sometimes, when the poor perceive it not. (*Psal.* 97. 2.) *Clouds and darkness are round about him, Righteousnesse and Judgement are the habitation of his Throne.* When a man cannot see the Lord doing right, yet the Lord doth right. The Sun shineth when eclipsed or covered with a Cloud. The Lord never ceaseth to right the poor, though neither poor nor rich perceive how, or which way he doth it.

Secondly, I answer, He giveth right to the poor, even when they want right, or when they are under the sorest oppressions, by supporting their hearts in this perswasion, that he will give them right. The poor have right when their minds are satisfied that they shall have right. There is no true Godly poor man in the world, how much soever afflicted, but his heart is, or may be satisfied, that he shall have right. That's a sure word (*Psal.* 9. 18.) *The needy shall not always be forgotten, the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.* And therefore we may pray with confidence, *Forget not, O Lord, the Congregation of thy poor for ever*, (Psal. 74. 19.) The poor may rest in this assurance, while their troubles rest upon them, that God will *bring forth their Righteousnesse as the Light, and their Judgement as the Noon day*, (Psal. 37. 6.) He hath right, who believes he shall have it; as he that believeth, hath everlasting life in hope, long before he attains the possession of it, (*John* 3. 36.)

Thirdly, Though we say, The Lord giveth right to the poor, both speedily and constantly, yet he reserveth to himself a liberty as to time, and means, and manner; as in all his outward Administrations, so in ministring or giving out this right; the Lord waits to be gracious, till we are ready for his grace, and he waits (in the same sence) to be righteous, till the poor are ready for their right; they shall not stay for it, when once they are ready for it; and it would be a wrong to them to have their right, before they are ready for it.

Lastly, There is a day spoken of, wherein the Lord will do all his poor right in the view of all the world, (*Acts* 17. 31.) *He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the World in Righteousnesse, by that man whom he hath ordained.* The day approacheth, wherein the Lord will judge the world in righteousnesse. Right is prepared & designed for them. The time till right shall be done to all, as is desired, or to the utmost of their desires, maketh hast: *He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry; Behold* (saith he) *I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be*, (Rev. 22. 12.) And if the Lord come with a reward in his hand for those who have done well, he will undoubtedly come with right in his hand to give all those who have suffered wrongfully.

JOB,

JOB, Chap. 36. Vers. 7.

He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with Kings are they on the throne, yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.

THis verse contains a further confirmation of Gods righteous and gracious dealing with the righteous and gracious poor, yea, with all that are righteous and gracious. The words may be taken, either in a stricter or in a larger sense.

First, Strictly, as an Exposition of the latter part of the former verse, *He giveth right to the poor*, that is, *He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous:* We may put both together, *He is so set to give right to the righteous poor, he takes such care of them, that he cannot take his eye off from them.*

Secondly, In a larger and more general sense, as a Conclusion upon the whole matter, that, *God will not desert any righteous person, whether poor or rich, high or low, God will take notice of piety and godliness, wheresoever he finds it,*

He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.

חסר *minuit, diminuit, ademit, subtraxit.*

The word which we translate *withdraweth*, and is here used negatively, *He withdraweth not*, signifies, strictly in the Noune, any kind of abatement or diminution, and in the Verb, to diminish, or abate, or take short in any kind that which was before. When *Pharaoh* (Exod. 5. 8.) gave out a fresh Charge for burdening, or indeed oppressing the Children of *Israel* in their bondage, the Order ran in this stile; *The tale of bricks which they did make heretofore you shall lay upon them, you shall not diminish* or withdraw any, you shall not abate them a brick. And *Moses* shewing how sacred a thing the Word of God is, (*Deut.* 9. 2.) gives a double check or prohibition to all medlers with it: First, to medlers by way of addition, *Ye shall not add unto the Word:* Secondly, by way of abatement, or abstraction, *Ye shall not diminish*, or *withdraw from it:* it is this word; As if the Lord had said, *Every tittle of my word shall stand by it self, and every Iota be established; be sure that ye put nothing to it, that you withdraw nothing from it.* Further, this word which we translate *withdraw*, is rendred also *to clip*, as the hayr of the head or beard is *clipt*, (*Jer.* 48. 37.) It is indeed high-treason against the King of Heaven, to clip his coyn, his word, which bears the royal stamp and superscription of his truth and holiness. Thus here, *he withdraweth not*, that is, the Lord doth not abate, lessen, diminish, or take off his *eyes from the righteous*, his eyes are fixed on them for good alwayes, and they are alwayes fixed in the same strength and vertue; *He withdraweth not*

His eyes.

God is a Spirit without parts and passions, yet often in Scripture parts and passions are ascribed to him in allusion to man, here eyes, *He withdraweth not his eyes*, that is, his sight, or his providence. And we may take notice, that in Scripture, where this expression is used without any further addition, it is alwayes taken in a good sense. When we read either of Gods keeping his eyes upon his people, or of his not withdrawing his eyes from his people, it alwayes respects their priviledge, benefit and comfort; *He withdraweth not his eyes*

Oculos domini esse super aliquem, nisi aliquid additur semper in bonum sumitur & peculiarem ejus favorem et curam importat. Bold.

From the righteous.

He doth not say, from this or that righteous man, but from *the righteous*, implying the whole kind or generation of the righteous. The indefinite is universal; we may render it thus; he withdraweth not his eyes from any that are righteous. The righteous here may be taken in a two-fold notion, First, for the righteous, as to their state, or who are in a state of righteousness. Man wanting a righteousness of his own, hath the righteousness of another assigned and imputed to him. Justified persons through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, are righteous persons, as hath been shewed heretofore. Secondly, We may take *righteous* here, with respect to the righteousness of their wayes and actions: *They who do righteousness are righteous*, saith the Apostle *John*. To a righteous state, there belongs a righteous way, a righteous walk, righteous acting; not that the righteous do not sin, but they would not, nor do they sin at all as the unrighteous. It is a high blemish or staine to the Gospel, when any that pretend to a righteous state, or to righteousness by Jesus Christ, are not righteous as to their

wayes and course, as to their walkings and workings, whether towards God or man. 'Tis true, in a strict legal sense, none are righteous, no not one; but in a Gospel sense all justified and sanctified persons are righteous; and they are called so, not only positively as to what themselves are, but comparatively, as to what the men of the world are, who live in a state or walk in a course of sin and unrighteousness. *The Lord withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.*

But some may here object or question, Is this true only of the righteous? Doth the Lord at any time withdraw his eyes from the unrighteous? truly that would be very good newes to many unrighteous persons, they would be glad that they and their way might be hid from God, or that God would not look upon them.

I answer, This Scripture is not to be so understood, as if God did behold the righteous and not the wicked, for (*Prov.* 15. 3.) *The eyes of the Lord are every where, beholding the evil and the good*, whether things done or persons doing them. The Lord doth not withdraw his eyes from the most unrighteous persons, nor from any of their acts or wayes of unrighteousness. And when it is said here, *The Lord withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous*, it is meant of a peculiar eye, which the Lord hath upon the righteous; he beholds both the righteous and the unrighteous, yet he doth not behold the unrighteous, as he beholds the righteous; which I shall clear further by giving in a five-fold discovery, what that eye of the Lord is which is upon the righteous, foure of which are distinct and totally differing from that eye with which he beholdeth unrighteous men, and from every one of them I shall give you an observation for our further profiting by this general assertion, that *the Lord withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.* There is a five-fold eye of God spoken of in Scripture.

First, There is a discerning eye, that eye by which he unerringly knoweth what every man is, and what every man doth.

Hence note;

The Lord taketh exact and full notice of, he clearly discerns the righteous in every condition.

This is true also of the unrighteous; therefore *David* puts it universally, (*Psal.* 11. 4.) *His eyes behold, his eye-lids try the children of men*, that is, his sight discovers and discerns what they are, of what sort soever they are. We may see many men, yet not discover what they are, they may have a faire outside to our view, whilest within they are foule and full of rottennes; they may appear in Sheeps cloathing, yet inwardly be ravening Wolves. But the Lords eye is a trying eye, he doth not only know who men are, but he knows what they are. Such is the importance of that Scripture, (*Heb.* 4. 13.) *All things are naked and manifest to his eyes, with whom we have to do*; that is, the Lord doth so behold things and persons, that he hath a clear understanding of them. And though the Lords eye be thus upon all men, yet this is specially affirmed of righteous men, (*Psal.* 33. 18.) *Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, and hope in his mercy.* Again, (*Psal.* 34. 15.) *His eye is over the righteous.* Both texts teach us, that God considers not only *what they do*, but as I may say, *how they do*, whether it be peace with them, or whether it be trouble with them, whether it be joy with them, or whether it be sorrow with them, the Lords eye is over them, to discern, not only whether, and how they go, but how things go with them.

Secondly, The Lord hath a directing or a counselling eye.

Hence Note;

The Lord with his eye favourably guides, directs, and counsels righteous men.

This eye of the Lord, as it denotes favour, is peculiar to the righteous. We have that expresly, (*Psal.* 32. 8.) *I will instruct thee, and teach thee*, (how?) *I will guide thee with mine eye.* We put in the Margen, *I will counsel thee*, that is, thee a Godly man, a *David*, spoken of (*v.* 6, 7.) mine eye shall give thee counsel. Men can give direction by the eye, and they that are acquainted with them, understand what they mean when they look this way or that way, thus or so. *Solomon* saith, *A naughty person winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers*, (*Pro.* 6. 12, 13.) that is, all the postures and gestures of his body, shew what he is, stark naught, and silently teach others to be naught. The holy God also teacheth by his feet and fingers, his goings and doings, his workes and wayes teach us the work which we should do, and the way wherein we should go; he hath a proviDd 2 viden-

vidential eye; the looks of providence give counsel to those who know how to look upon them, and interpret them. The Lord hath a providential eye upon the righteous, not only to foresee their dangers, but to direct their course; he sheweth them their way, and their work by this eye; he tells them what pleaseth him, and what displeaseth him, by this eye; this eye the Lord doth not withdraw from the righteous; *He will guide the feet of his Saints,* (1 *Sam.* 2. 9.) 'Tis possible for a righteous man sometime to be without counsel, he may neither know what counsel to give himself, nor what to take from others; as *Jehoshaphat* said in his streight (2 *Chron.* 20. 12.) *He knoweth not what to do*; yet (as *Jehoshaphat* said then) *his eyes are towards the Lord*, and the Lords eyes are towards him. When he is thus counselless, there is a counselling, a directing eye of God upon him; though he at that present know not his way, yea, be out of his way, yet he is not out of Gods eye, and that will in due time shew him his way, or bring him into his way again: though God suffer him to go out of the way, yet the eye of God is upon him, even when he is out of his way, and that eye will reduce and bring him back to his right way. There is a directing, a counselling eye of God.

Thirdly, The Scripture speaks of a pitying and a compassionating eye of God. It is ordinary with us to hear those that are in distress cry out to those who pass by, *cast an eye upon us, look upon us*, and that is as much as to say, pity us, have compassion upon us; this eye of pity the Lord doth not withdraw from the righteous.

Hence note;

The righteous are under the compassionating, the pitying eye of God.

When the people of *Israel* were in *Egypt*, the Lord said to *Moses*, (Exod. 3. 7.) *I have surely seen the affliction of my people*; and what kind of sight was that? what eye of God was it which was upon them? the words following, and the whole series of Gods dealings also clear it, that it was an eye of compassion; *I have surely seen*, or *seeing I have seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt*, &c. *and I am come down to deliver them.* We read in that notable place, (*Gen.* 16. 14.) when *Hagar* was in a very sad and distressed condition, being cast out of *Abrahams* family,

family, God had compassion on her, and shewed her a Well, where she might have water for her self and child, and the text saith, *She called the name of the Well Beer-la-hai-roi*, that is, *the Well of him that liveth and seeth me*: As if she had said, *God hath seen me in my afflicted condition, and he hath also had compassion on me.* That's another great priviledge, the righteous are under this pitying and compassionating eye of God; and from thence follows,

The fourth eye of God, *his providing eye, his caring eye.*

Hence note;

The Lord doth so eye the righteous in their straits and afflictions with compassion, that he also provides to deliver them out of their affliction, out of their straits.

There is a providing eye of God continually beholding his people: Of this providing eye *Abraham* spake, (*Gen.* 22. 14.) when he was put upon that hard task, the sacrificing of his own son, his *Isaac*, the Lord had compassion on him, and provided another sacrifice, and therefore he called the name of that place, *Jehovah Jireh, the Lord will see or provide*; that is, as the Lord hath seen and provided for me, so he will see and provide for all his in their greatest exigents and extremities. What *Abraham* said, all the seed of *Abraham* may say in the day of their distress, *Jehovah Jireh, the Lord will see and provide.* And as the Lord hath a seeing and a providing eye for his in times of distress, so at all times. *Moses* said of the Land of *Israel*, (Deut. 11. 12.) *It is a Land of hills and of vallies, a Land which the Lord thy God careth for: The eyes of the Lord thy God are alwayes upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year.* The eyes of the Lord are upon the land, that is, upon the people of the land, or upon the land for the peoples sake who dwell in it: What to do? the text answers, *to care for it*, that is, to provide all things for their good, to give raine in season, and the fruits of the earth, not only for the support, but comfort of his people. We read of the same eye promised to the people of *Israel* in the Land of their captivity, (*Jer.* 29. 6.) *I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again into this Land*; I will not only give them a look, or a glance, but fix or *set mine eyes upon them for good*, that is, to do them good. It is a proverbial saying amongst us, *The Masters eye fattens the Horse:* The Masters eye is a caring, a providing eye,

he

he will take care that the Horse shall be well fed. Certainly, Gods eye is a fattening eye; they shall be fat and flourish, from whom God will not withdraw his providing eye, at least they shall have necessaries, or food convenient, both for soul and body.

Fifthly, The Scripture speaks of a delighting eye, or of an eye of complacency; and thus also the Lords eye is upon the righteous, he beholdeth them with high content, he is, as I may say, taken with them, (*Isa.* 66. 1.) *To him will I look that is poor.* Among all objects, none so pleasant or pleasing to God as the poor. What poor doth he mean? surely the righteous poor, or the poor in spirit, (as was shewed upon the former verse) let such a one be whom he will, *to him will I look*, mine eye is greatly pleased to behold such a one. The word used by *Elihu* in this Text, doth further clear it, while he saith, *He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.* How pleasant is any object to our eyes from which we cannot withdraw or take them off, but must be continually feeding them upon it! Some cannot take off their eyes from unlawfull wanton objects, because they are so delighted in them, they have as the Apostle *Peter* speaks, *eyes full of adultery*, and such can never glut their eyes with adulterous objects. Now certainly the Lord is exceedingly taken with the beauty, the spirituall beauty of a righteous person, with the comlinesse, the spirituall comlinesse of those that are godly, when the Text saith, *He withdraweth not his eyes from them*, but carries them (as it were) alwayes in his eye. Among the Latines, to carry one in our eye is an expression of singular high content, delight and pleasure taken in such a person. We may say of all the righteous, the Lord carrieth them in his eye, and therefore he is highly pleased and delighted with them.

In oculis aliquem gestare, est eum vehementer amplecti & diligere.

Thus you have this five-fold eye, which the Lord doth *not withdraw from the righteous*; and, in that the text saith, he doth not withdraw or abate or diminish his eye from them, but looks fully upon them, it gives us this sixth note;

The inspection of God upon, his compassion towards, his care of, his delight in the righteous is perpetual.

Though God doth afflict, yet he never ceaseth to love or care for his people. *Elihu* was much upon that, industriously to remove the

the scandal of the crosse, which 'tis like then did and still doth offend many, and causeth them to stumble, when they see the righteous afflicted; therefore he would assure us, that God never withdraweth his eye from them: but his care of, and pity to, yea pleasure in them is everlasting. That eye of his which carries all this in it, is never shut towards them. The Lord saith of the Church, (*Isa.* 49. 16.) *Thy walls are continually before me.* As the walls of *Sion*, so the walls of every righteous person in *Zion*, or of every true Sionist, are continually before the Lord, *he withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous*; *He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep*, (Psal. 121. 4.) he that neither slumbers nor sleeps, needs not withdraw his eyes from us, and he that hath a tender regard to us, will not. The Prophet (*Isa.* 27. 3.) speaking of the Church under the Allegory of a Vineyard, brings in the Lord giving this assurance, *I will water it every moment, I will keep it night and day.* He that waters a Vineyard every moment, never withdraws his eyes from it; now by watering is meant the supply of whatsoever good the Vineyard or Church of God stood in need of; to be so supplyed is to be well watered. The providence of God, as to our spirituall and temporall estate, watcheth over us continually to water us.

Non solum Sapientem attentam; curam denotat hæc phrasis, sed perseverantem, continuam minimeq; desinentem. Bold:

But some may question here, Doth not the Lord withdraw his eyes from the righteous? are his eyes continually upon them? what then is the meaning of that Scripture, (*Psal.* 44. 23.) and of several others of like importance; *Awake Lord, why sleepest thou?* That was at once the voyce of the Church, and her complaint; surely the Lords eyes were withdrawn from the Church when he was asleep. I answer, The Lord sleeps, with respect to his Church, as the Church sleeps with respect to the Lord, (*Cant.* 5. 2.) *I sleep* (saith the Spouse) *but my heart waketh.* Indeed the Lord doth act sometimes so towards the righteous, or lets things go so with the righteous, as if he were asleep, as if he took no notice of them, yet still his heart waketh towards them: So that his sleeping doth not imply an intermission of his care, but only a suspension of the effects of his care. For while the Lord lets things go so as if he were asleep, he then wakes and watches as much over the righteous, over his Church and people, as at any other time, when they have the highest actings of his providence for their outward peace and preservation.

And

And if that other sort of Scriptures should be objected against his perpetual watching over the righteous, or that he never withdraws his eyes, which say, *he hideth his face*, and turns himself away from them. I answer, Those Scriptures are all of them to be understood according to the former interpretation, the Lord hideth himself, as to sense and present appearance, but he never hideth himself, as to the real continuance of his love and care towards his Church or People. This Objection some made to one of the Ancients; the Lord (said they) may seem to withdraw his eyes from the righteous, because he suffers them to fall under the oppression of the unrighteous. No, saith he, *The Lord beholds the righteous, though they perish by the hand of the unrighteous; yea, when it is worst with them, the Lords Eye is upon them for good, both to see how they carry it, or behave themselves in their Sufferings, and likewise to provide a full reward and recompence for them after all their sufferings.*

Æmulos suos nunc magis, respicit, nam jam prævidet, quid eis misereorditer recompensat. Greg: in loc:

Before I pass from this part of the verse, let me make these two Inferences.

First, *If the Lord never withdraweth his Eyes from the righteous, then let the righteous know their own Priviledge and Mercy.* How happy are they upon whom the Eyes of the Lord abide always for good! The Lord cannot endure to have good men out of his Eye, as Parents say of their darlings, and Princes of their Favourites. If we were assured, that the Eye of a great man, who loveth us, were always upon us, if he should promise to have an eye to us, (That's an ordinary Promise among men, *I will have an Eye to you*, that is, I will take care of you; if we have (I say) but such a word from a man in Power) we think we have got a great revenue; *such a great Lord will have an eye to us, we have his word, he will not take off his care from us.* How much then should we boast and rejoyce in spirit, that the Lord hath said, *I will always have a care of you, I will never withdraw mine eyes from you, I will never leave you, nor forsake you* (Heb. 13. 5.) As it will be the eternal happiness of Believers in Glory, always to behold, or see God, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*; they have some sight of him here in a Glass, but they shall see him face to face; that is, they shall see him clearly, as clearly as the creature is capable of seeing or enjoying him; now (I say) as *it is the happiness of the Saints in Heaven always to behold God, so it is the*

the happiness of Saints here on earth, that the Lord doth always behold them, that his eye is never withdrawn from them.

Consider therefore, you that are in a righteous state, whose acts and words, and walkings, are also righteous, consider your Priviledge, consider what it is to have the Lord Jesus always setting his eye upon you, to have the Lords directing and counselling eye always upon you, to have the Lords pitying and compassionating eye always upon you, to have the Lords providing and caring eye always upon you, to have the Lords delighting and well-pleased eye always upon you; to have the eyes of the Lord thus upon you, and to have them always upon you, what can ye desire more! Thus 'tis promised, (2 *Chron.* 16. 9.) *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them, whose heart is perfect with him.* And whose hearts are perfect with him, but the hearts of the righteous? this is their priviledge. Jesus Christ (*Zech.* 3. 9.) is called, *The stone*, and saith the Text, *upon one stone shall be seven eyes.* There are two interpretations given of that Propheſie, First, thus, *upon one stone shall be seven eyes*, that is, the eyes of all men shall be upon that stone, upon Christ. Seven is a perfect definite Number, put for all numbers; the eyes of all shall be upon the stone, upon Christ; although he be to the wicked, or to them *that believe not, a stumbling stone, and a rock of offence*, (1 Pet. 2. 8.) yet to them that believe he is a most precious stone; and as they are always beholding the beauty of that precious stone, so Jesus Christ doth indeed invite all eyes to behold him (*Isa.* 65. 1.) *Behold me, behold me*; he would have us take off our eyes from all others, and look steddily on him. Let all eyes be upon the stone; that's a good interpretation. There is a second, which suits the present poynt I am upon fully: *Seven eyes shall be upon one stone*; that is, the eyes of God shall be upon Jesus Christ. This is a promise made unto him as Mediator, when he came in the flesh, or in our nature, to do that great work for us: *Then*, saith the Propher, *upon one stone shall be seven eyes*; which seven eyes note the perfect knowledge of God, and so the perfect care that God would have of Christ, to bear him up through that work of our Redemption: *Upon one stone shall be seven eyes*; I will take care of him, I will provide for him, and I will delight in him. As Jesus Christ is all eye, and Jesus Christ doth enlighten all eyes, that is, all that see,

are enlightened by Jeſus Chriſt; ſo the eyes of God, the eyes of the Father were alwayes upon him, in favour, in love, in care, when he was here in this world about that great work of our ſalvation, and he had abundunt experience of the eyes of his Father upon him. Now, mark it, this was the great promiſe made to *Chriſt, the Stone*, that upon him *ſhould be ſeven eyes*, the eyes of the Lord ſhould be alway and fully upon him. And this is the priviledge of every one that hath part and intereſt in this ſtone Jeſus Chriſt, every righteous perſon hath *ſeven eyes* upon him, the Lord God beholds him exactly, perfectly, and alwayes; *He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.*

A ſecond inference is this; If the Lord never withdraweth his eyes from the righteous, *Then let the righteous know their duty*: What's that? *Never to withdraw their eyes from the Lord.* There is a threefold eye which a righteous man ſhould never withdraw from God. Firſt, An eye of faith: Secondly, An eye of hope: Thirdly, An eye of dependance: and that, Firſt, for direction in all his wayes; Secondly, for protection in all his dangers. *I will lift up mine eyes* (ſaith *David*, Pſal. 121. 1.) *unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.* And again, (*Pſal.* 123. 1, 2.) *Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwelleſt in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of ſervants look unto the hand of their Maſters, and as the eyes of a mayden unto the hand of her Miſtreſs, ſo our eyes waite upon the Lord our God, untill he have mercy on us*; that is, we never withdraw our eyes from him, while we have need of his mercy, and that is alwayes. *Walk before me*, that is, with an eye of faith, hope, and dependance, was the Lords charge to the father of the faithfull, (*Gen.* 17. 1.) *I have ſet the Lord alwayes before me*, that is, I keep a conſtant eye upon the Lord, was the profeſſion of *David*, as the type of Chriſt, (*Pſal.* 16. 8.) And as to keep an eye on God is beſt and ſafeſt for us, ſo 'tis extreamly pleaſing and contentfull to Chriſt, as he tells the Church, (*Cant.* 9. 9.) *Thou haſt raviſhed my heart, my Siſter, my Spouſe, thou haſh raviſhed my heart with one of thine eyes*, that is, with a believing, a hoping, a depending look on me for all that good which thou wanteſt and wouldſt have, or with a delighting look on me as thy chiefeſt good. Let not the righteous withdraw their eyes from God, *for he withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.*

But

But (which is yet more) *with Kings are they on the Throne.*

Theſe words fully clear up the ſenſe, which I have given of that negative promiſe, *he withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous*, namely, that the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous for good. His is not a bare beholding of them, favours flow from his eyes. When *the eyes of God are upon the righteous*, they find the ſweet and benefit of it. In the former verſe *Elihu* ſaid, God will give the poor right, here he ſaith more, he will give the poor, the righteous poor, a reward, and that no ſmall one, *With Kings are they on the Throne.*

The Latine tranſlation reads this part of the verſe, not of the righteous poor, but of righteous Kings; *He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous, and he placeth Kings upon the Throne for ever.* That's a truth, the Lord placeth Kings upon their Thrones, and eſtabliſheth them there; but that is not the meaning or truth of this place; nor will the Hebrew (with any tolerable convenience) bear ſuch a tranſlation. *Et reges in ſolio collocat in perpetuum.* Vulg:

Secondly, There are others, who, a little miſtaking the word which we tranſlate *Kings*, render it *Angels*; *They are with Angels on the Throne.* There is but very little difference in the Hebrew between thoſe two words that ſignifie *Kings* and *Angels*, (the former is *Melachim*, the latter *Maleachim*) which hath given occaſion for this reading, *He placeth them with Angels on the Throne*; and ſo the words are interpreted of the glorious exaltation of the righteous in Heaven, (when indeed they ſhall *be like Angels*, Angels Fellows, (*Mat.* 22. 30.) and walk hand in hand with Angels.) Mr *Broughton* though he tranſlate (*with Kings*) yet ſeems to carry it in that ſenſe, giving his gloſſe in the Margen, thus; *They ſhall be made fit for light with the living, with the Angels of God, his ſervants, in their degree, and be placed for ever in honour, and be high in honour and dignity; ſo ye ſhall ſit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Iſrael.* But this Text will not ſerve that purpoſe neither; and therefore I ſhall take it plainly as we render it, *They ſhall be with Kings upon the Throne.* There is a two-fold interpretation of the words according to this tranſlation. *Quaſi* מלאכים *ſcriberetur pro* מלכים Merc: *Cum regibus tantum valet, an ſicut reges.* Bold:

Firſt, The Lord will exalt the righteous to great dignity, they ſhall be like Kings and Princes in this world, or they ſhall be *Ut* את *ſit* עם *cum; ut nume-*

rus mutetur, ut passim fit in hoc libro. Merc:

את articulus accusativi casus quem verba transitiva sive activa regunt; accipitur tamen non rarò pro à ex, de, & cum præpositionibus. Drus: Obser: sacra: l. 9. c. 7.

be in great favour with Kings, even Kings Favourites.

Secondly, *They shall be with Kings upon the Throne*, that is, they themselves shall be Kings. The Hebrew strictly read, is, *and Kings on the Throne*; they shall not only be like Kings, but they themselves shall be Kings, *and sit upon Thrones*: either of these interpretations reach the scope of *Elihu* fully. As if he had said, The righteous shall be greatly advanced or exalted by Kings, whose priviledge it is to sit on Thrones, or *they shall be Kings upon the Throne*. Some experiences and examples have confirmed this. The Lord hath not only given righteous persons great advancement, and great favour with Kings, who sit on Thrones, but hath even advanced them to Kingly dignity, and given them Thrones to sit upon.

A Throne is a Seat Royal, the Seat of Majesty; A Throne is a seat exalted above other seats, as the person sitting upon it is exalted above other persons. *Solomon made him a great Throne of Ivory, and the Throne had six steps*, (1 Kings 10. 18.) God is represented sitting upon a Throne, and there receiving honour from all that were before him, (*Rev.* 4. 2, 9.) The whole Heaven is called the *Throne of God, and the earth his footstoole*, (Isa. 66. 1.) because as Heaven is high above all, so there are the fullest manifestations of the greatness and glory of God. And because Thrones note power and dignity, therefore the *Angels* (who among all meer creatures excell in power and dignity,) are called *Thrones*, (*Col.* 1. 16.) So then, *to be with Kings on the Throne*, that is, to be near them, and much accepted by them, is a very great honour; and that is the least here intended. But to be Kings on the Throne, is the greatest worldly honour; and possibly so much is here intended the righteous, while *Elihu* saith, *But with Kings are they upon the Throne.*

In that the righteous are said here to be *with Kings upon the Throne*, we learn,

Righteous persons are in high esteem with God:

He would not thus, in love, set them high, if he did not highly esteem them; he would not thus prefer them, if he did not know their worth. The world usually judges righteous persons, as if they were fit only for the dunghill, as if they were the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things, (1 *Cor.* 4. 13.) but God hath another opinion of them, he thinks them fit to serve Princes, and to be near the Throne. Take heed of judging them unworthy to be at the footstool, whom God thinks worthy to be with Kings on the Throne.

Secondly, Note;

God hath exalted, and will exalt righteous persons.

Whom he highly esteems, he sometimes advanceth highly in this world, they shall be with Kings on the Throne, (*Psal.* 107. 40, 41.) *He powreth contempt upon Printes*, that is, upon unrighteous Princes; yet (as it followeth) *He setteth the poor on high from affliction*, so we translate and put in the Margen, *He setteth the poor on high after affliction.* He afflicts the righteous to purge them, and so to prepare and fit them for greatest enjoyments. We have a like affirmation, (*Psal.* 113. 7, 8.) *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the needy out of the dunghill, that he may set them with Princes, even the Princes of his people.* Thus spake *Hannah* in her Song, (1 *Sam.* 2. 8.) and thus, in effect, spake the blessed Virgin in hers, (*Luke* 1. 52.) *He hath brought down the mighty from their seats, and hath exalted the lowly and meek.* We have some Scripture-instances of such exaltations. *Joseph*, a righteous person, was cast into bonds, yet God sets him, not only at liberty, but on high, he was with the King on the Throne, *Only in the Throne*, (said *Pharaoh*, Gen. 41. 40.) *will I be greater than thou*; and all were commanded to bow the knee to him. *David*, a righteous person, followed the Ewes great with young, and the Lord set him upon the Throne, upon the Throne of *Israel*. *Valentinian* was committed to prison by the command of *Julian* the Apostate, because he struck an Idolatrous Priest, that would have sprinkled him (*aqua lustrali*) with their unholy holy water, as he stood in the gate of the Temple, where *Julian* was sacrificing to his Idol-gods; yet he escaped that danger, and afterwards ascended the Throne of that Great Empire. The Lord knows both how to deliver the righteous out of trouble, and to bring them to honour.

Lastly, We may hence infer, *If the righteous are with Kings on the Throne, then righteousness hath a reward. Them that honour me* (saith the Lord, 1 *Sam.* 2. 30.) *I will honour.* It is no vaine thing to serve the Lord; to be righteous, and to do righteously,

ouſly, cannot but iſſue well. The Lord hath all promotions at his diſpoſe, (*Pſal.* 75. 6, 7.) And therefore he ſaith, *Say ye to the righteous, that it ſhall be well with him; for they ſhall eate the fruit of their doings,* (Iſa. 3. 10.) *With Kings are they on the Throne.*

Yet, let me add, by way of Caution, that neither this Text, nor the notes given from it, are ſo to be underſtood, as if all righteous perſons might hence expect great advancements in this world, or to be the ſpecial Favourites of Kings and Princes: The word of God doth not feed ſuch humours, but mortifies them; nor doth it cheriſh any ſuch aſpiring expectations in righteous men, but teaches them quiet ſubmiſſion in their own private ſtations and callings, to thoſe who are upon the Throne. So that while *Elihu* ſaith of the righteous, *With Kings are they on the Throne,* his meaning muſt be taken ſoberly, and may be taken diſtinctly, thus;

Firſt, That God hath great reſpect to, and high favours for righteous men.

Secondly, That he brings ſome of them (as it is ſaid of *Daniel* with the Prince of the Eunuches, *Chap.* 1. 9.) *into favour and tender love with Kings and Princes.*

Thirdly, That the Lord hath often advanced righteous perſons to Thrones and Kingly Dignities. And when-ever the Lord advanceth any of the righteous, he makes good this promiſe, becauſe in the exaltation of one, the faith and piety of all righteous perſons, or the whole kind of them, is honoured and exalted.

Etiamſi id externè non fiat ſemper, tamen omnium fides & pietas quorundam piorum exaltatione honoratur. Coc.

Fourthly, To be ſure, all the righteous ſhall be with Kings on the Throne hereafter. Chriſt hath purchaſed, and is gone to prepare a Kingdome for the righteous, and will give them a better Crown, than any this world affords, an incorruptible one. As now the righteous are ſpiritual Kings, or Kings in a ſpiritual ſenſe, (*Rev.* 1. 6.) that is, they rule over and keep in ſubjection, their own luſts and corruptions, pride, ambition, love of the world, wrath, envy, and whatever elſe in them doth rebell and exalt it ſelf againſt the knowledge of God; yea, they as Kings (in this world) conquer the world by faith, (1 *Joh.* 5. 4.) and the Prince of this world, the devil, through the power of Jeſus Chriſt (as I ſay all the righteous are now ſpiritual Kings (in the ſenſe given) through grace here on earth, ſo they ſhall be glorious Kings and reigne with Chriſt for ever in Heaven; and then ſhall this word of

of God by *Elihu*, be fulfilled to the utmoſt, *With Kings are they upon the Throne,*

Yea, he doth eſtabliſh them for ever, and they are exalted.

Elihu proceeds to ſhew the happineſs of the righteous yet further; The Lord doth not only advance them, but eſtabliſh them; nor doth he only eſtabliſh them for a while, but even perpetuateth their eſtabliſhment, *He eſtabliſheth them for ever.* The word is, *He makes them ſit.* We render fully to the ſenſe, *He eſtabliſheth them.* The Lord ſets them up on high, and then ſettles them on high. Some get on high, but they cannot keep on high, they find no eſtabliſhment there; but God can eſtabliſh

וישיבם *a radice* ישב *ſedere, & in hac conjugatione, ſedere fecit.*

For ever.

The *for ever* of this world is a long time. The Lord ſaith of *Sion,* (*Pſal.* 132. 14.) *Here will I dwell for ever,* that is, long. Thus in the text, *He will eſtabliſh them for ever,* that is, they ſhall have long eſtabliſhment. And if we take it as to their exaltation in the other world, there God will eſtabliſh them to the utmoſt latitude of *for ever,* that is, to eternity. The Septuagint tranſlate, *He will eſtabliſh them to victory.* The ſame word in the Hebrew, ſignifies *eternity,* and alſo *victory,* becauſe eternity overcomes and triumphs over all: The Lord ſhall ſettle them to victory; and that may have a good interpretation, with reſpect to the power of God in ſetling them; *He ſhall ſettle them to victory,* that is, they ſhall (in his power) overcome all difficulties that ſtand in the way of their eſtabliſhment.

εἰς νῖκος in victoriam. Sept: *Sic* 2 Sam. 2. 26. μὴ εἰς νῖκος καταφάγεται ἡ ῥομφαία.

Hence Note;

As preferment, ſo eſtabliſhment is from God.

Firſt, He eſtabliſheth all things, whether they be, Firſt, natural things, the heavens and the earth, times and ſeaſons, (*Gen.* 8. 22.) or Secondly, Civil things, States and Nations; or Thirdly, Spiritual things; Firſt, the Goſpel, and the Church of the Goſpel, that he eſtabliſheth as a Rock, againſt which the gates of hell ſhall not prevaile, (*Mat.* 16. 18. ſo *Iſa.* 44. 28. *Pſal.* 87. 5.) Secondly, Grace in the hearts of his people, (1 *Pet.* 5. 10.) and them in the wayes of grace, (2 *Theſ.* 2. 17. *Chap.* 3. 3.) Thus God eſtabliſheth all things.

Secondly,

Secondly, He eſtabliſheth, counſels and actions, (*Iſa.* 44. 26.) *He confirmeth the word of his ſervants, and performeth the counſel of his Meſſengers*; that is, he makes good, and brings to effect that word which they have given in counſel. And as for actions, *Moſes* prayeth (*Pſal.* 90. 17.) *Eſtabliſh thou the work of our hands upon us, yea the work of our hands eſtabliſh thou it.* Whatever is in our hands quickly molders away, and (as the enemies ſaid when the *Jewes* built the walls of *Jeruſalem*, Neh. 4. 3.) *If a Fox go up upon it, it will fall, unleſs the Lord eſtabliſh it*; but neither the Foxes with their ſubtilty, nor the Lyons with their power and cruelty, ſhall be able to overthrow that wall, or thoſe actions, which the Lord is pleaſed to eſtabliſh; for *he doth eſtabliſh them*

For ever.

Hence Note;

The Lord can eſtabliſh, not only for a time, but for always; he can give a perpetuity of eſtabliſhment, not only a laſting, but an everlaſting eſtabliſhment; he can give an eternity of eſtabliſhment.

Here is compleat happineſs. What can we deſire more, than Firſt, to be in a great and good eſtate; Secondly, to be eſtabliſhed there; Thirdly, to be eſtabliſhed for ever? They that are ſet high are ſet in ſlippery places, unleſs the Lord be with them; how much more if the Lord be againſt them? (*Pſal.* 73. 18.) But the Lord can ſet us as high as the higheſt Rock, and yet make us as firme as the firmeſt Rock. *He doth eſtabliſh them for ever,*

And they are exalted.

Some read thus, *He eſtabliſheth them for ever, when they are exalted*, which makes a very clear ſenſe; when they are got high, the Lord doth eſtabliſh them fully and finally. We render it as a diſtinct act of God, *They are eſtabliſhed for ever, and they are exalted*; probably intending thus much; that the Lord when he will do a thing, can do it, notwithſtanding all oppoſition, that either is or can be made againſt it; he ſets them with Kings on the Throne, and doth eſtabliſh them for ever; yea, they riſe in power and dignity more and more, *They are exalted.*

Hence

Hence Note;

What God will do, ſhall be done;

If he ſaith to a perſon, be exalted, he ſhall be exalted; if he ſaith to *Jeruſalem, thou ſhalt be built, and to the Temple, thy foundation ſhall be laid*, (Iſa. 44. 28.) it is done; if he ſaith, pull down *Babylon*, down it muſt come, even to the very foundation. *Ephraim* ſaid, (*Jer.* 30. 18.) *Thou haſt chaſtiſed me, and I was chaſtiſed*; I found the effects of thy chaſtiſement, it came home to me. What God will work, no man can let or put a ſtop to.

Further, From the other reading, Note;

Whom God ſets up, no man can pull down, till himſelf pleaſeth;

He doth eſtabliſh them for ever, when they are exalted. God is able to maintain his own acts, whether in caſting any down, or exalting them. When God ſaid *the mountains and heritage of Eſau waſt for the Dragons of the Wilderneſs*, (Mal. 1. 3.) *Edom* ſaid at the next verſe, (well, I ſee) *we are impoveriſhed, but we will return, and build the deſolate places.* As if *Edom* had ſaid, Though the Lord hath brought us thus low, yet we doubt not to recover our former glory. But what ſaith the Lord? hear what in the next line; *Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, They ſhall build*, (or let them build) *but I will throw down.* Now (I ſay) as when the Lord pulls down, none can build without his leave, ſo whom the Lord exalteth, none can pull down; *He eſtabliſheth them for ever, when they are exalted.* Thus *Elihu* ſets forth the exceeding kindneſs of God to, and his care over the righteous, not only his provident care as to their preſent condition, but as to the abiding of their exaltation and the eſtabliſhment of it for ever.

JOB, Chap. 36. Verſ. 8, 9, 10.

8. *And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction:*

9. *Then he ſheweth them their work, and their tranſgreſſions, that they have exceeded:*

10. *He openeth alſo their ear to diſcipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.*

THeſe three verſes hold forth three things in particular, all which concern the righteous, of whom *Elihu* ſaid in the former verſe, not only, that *God doth not withdraw his eyes from them*, but eſtabliſheth them on high, or advanceth them highly in this world.

Firſt, That poſſibly they may be caſt into ſore afflictions, even after their exaltation, & the newly promiſed laſtingnes of it, (*v.* 8.)

Secondly, That the procuring cauſe of theſe afflictions, is their own ſin; for we find mention of their tranſgreſſion in the 9th verſe, and of their iniquity in the tenth.

Thirdly, That the purpoſe and deſigne of God towards them, when they have brought themſelves into ſtreights, & are caſt into an afflicted condition, is very gracious, and tends to their everlaſting good. And this deſigne is three-fold.

Firſt, To diſcover their ſin to them; that's laid down at the 9th verſe, *Then he ſheweth them their work, and their tranſgreſſions.*

Secondly, To prepare them for a better receiving of faithful counſel and inſtruction, at the 10th verſe, *He openeth alſo their ear to diſcipline.*

Thirdly, To bring them quite off from their ſin; that's expreſſed in the cloſe of the 10th verſe, *and commandeth that they return from iniquity.* Theſe are the parts, this the purpoſe of the Context under hand;

Verſ. 8. *And if they be bound in fetters.*

There is ſome queſtion who are to be underſtood as the Antecedent to this, *they, if they*, who are they? Some, becauſe the words

words following ſpeak of *tranſgreſſion* and *iniquity*, conceive, that ſurely it muſt be meant of wicked men, or of the ungodly; but *Elihu* comes not upon that ſubject til the 13th verſe; there he turns his ſpeech to ſuch, *but the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath*, &c. Therefore here he doth not ſpeak of, or to, wicked, but righteous men, falling into trouble and affliction; *they*, that is, *the righteous*, &c.

Again, Taking righteous men to be the Antecedent (as the text plainly carries it) yet there is a difference in opinion, whether we are to underſtand *Elihu* ſpeaking of righteous men in that ſpecial dignity deſcribed at the 7th verſe, ſuch as are *with Kings on the Throne*, or of righteous men in general: I conceive we may underſtand the text of either. And therefore,

Firſt, When *Elihu* ſaith, *If they be bound in fetters*, he may intend thoſe righteous men who were ſo highly exalted in the former verſe, ſuch a change may come upon them; even they who were *with Kings on the Throne*, may come to be *bound in fetters, and holden in the cords of affliction.*

Secondly, He may intend it of righteous men in any other condition; for *Elihu* having ſhewed how graciouſly God dealeth in exalting ſome righteous men, ſheweth that God is gracious alſo unto thoſe that are not exalted, even unto thoſe that are greatly afflicted, and brought very low. Briefly, as in the former verſe he ſpake of righteous men lifted up, ſo here of righteous men caſt down: As if he had ſaid, *If any of the righteous are at any time ſo far from being exalted with Kings on the Throne, that they are caſt upon the dunghill, and are brought into great ſtreights, yet it is not becauſe God takes no care of them, or becauſe he hath caſt them out of his favour; but it is thus with righteous men for many bleſſed ends and purpoſes, which God hath upon them, or towards them, to ſhew them their ſin, to fit them for inſtruction, and to bring them off from their iniquity.* Thus the words prevent an objection; for *Elihu* having ſaid, *he withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous, but with Kings are they on the Throne*, ſome might ſay, You can ſhew us very few ſuch ſights, you can ſhew us few righteous men with Kings on the Throne, or exalted highly in this world; and we can ſhew you many righteous men in great trouble, in fetters and cords of affliction. Well, ſaith *Elihu*, ſuppoſe it be ſo, ſuppoſe you find many righteous men in ſuch a low condition,

yet God withdraweth not his eyes from them, no not then ; yea, he is doing them good by all the evils that they suffer. So then, if this relative *they* referre to righteous men in either capacity, either to such as were before exalted, and are now afflicted, or to such righteous men as were never so exalted, yea as are depressed and cast into an afflicted condition, yet God withdraweth not his eyes from them, but still continues his care of them, and tenderness towards them.

If they be bound in fetters, and holden by the cords of affliction.

Here are two hard words, *bound and holden*, bound as captives, bound as prisoners, *bound* in fetters, yea, and *holden in cords*, *holden* or *caught* as a poor bird in a net or snare, or as a wild beast in a toyle. *Bound in fetters, and holden in cords.* These *fetters* and *cords* may be understood two wayes.

First, Literally and properly, it is possible for a righteous man to be bound in fetters, and holden in cords, plainly so called. *Joseph* was cast into prison, *and the Iron entred into his soul*, and his feet were hurt in the Stocks, in material Stocks.

Secondly, We may expound these *fetters and cords* figuratively, or metaphorically, and so any trouble or streight is as a fetter, and as a cord: Thus to be *bound in fetters*, and *holden in cords*, is but an expression signifying any afflicted condition. Fetters and cords are Emblems of slavery & captivity. The Prophet foreshewing the willing contribution of divers strange Nations towards the help of the *Jewes* in their return from the Babylonish captivity, as also, beyond that, their subjection to Christ and the power of the Gospel, gives it under this shadow, (*Isa.* 45. 14.) *Thus saith the Lord, the labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of stature shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine*, (that is, they shall yeild themselves to thee as thy subjects, and more) *they shall come after thee in chaines, they shall come over* ; that is, they shall follow thee as captives do a conquering enemy, in chaines. In what chaines ? the meaning is not, that they shall come with chaines of Iron upon their bodies ; but even the stoutest, greatest, & richest of them shall humbly submit, they shall come even as prisoners, with their chaines about them, supplicating and intreating thy favour. We read in the holy History of the Kings, that the servants of *Benhadad* came with ropes about their necks

necks to *Ahab*, they came with material ropes about their necks in token of their abasement and readiness to submit unto what sentence soever the King of *Israel* should lay upon them. To come with ropes and chains, is, in Scripture Language, to come in deepest humiliation ; and *to be bound in chaines and fetters*, is to be in greatest affliction. That's the sense of the Prophet (*Isa.* 28. 22.) *Now therefore be ye not mockers* (there were some that derided him, threatning judgement in the name of the Lord, take heed of that) *lest your bands be made strong* ; that is, lest God bring you into such great afflictions, that you shall find and feel your selves (as it were) in bands, or (as *Elihu* expresseth it in the Text) *bound in fetters, and holden in the cords of affliction.* So then, this notes in general any state of trouble or sorrow, of misery or calamity that befalls us here below, (*Psal.* 107. 10.) *They that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron* ; that is, as fast bound in affliction, as if they were bound in iron. Thus here

Vincula sunt servitutis Symbola.

Holden in cords of affliction.

Some translate, *cords of poverty* ; the same word signifying both *affliction & poverty*, because poverty is so great an affliction. Here's the case, this is the condition into which *Elihu* supposeth righteous men may fall ; *They may be bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction.* Taking the words as they refer to righteous men in general, observe,

חבל עני *Funibus paupertatis.* Vulg: חבל *Dicitur qui quid premit & constringit ; quare appellatione* Funis *comprehenditur pignus, quo obligatur homo, &c. dolor praesertim parturientium.*

The best of men may fall into the worst outward condition ;

They may be in a condition of captivity, they may be in reall fetters and cords, or they may be in a state of affliction, as bad to them as fetters and cords. I have heretofore, more than once, spoken of the afflictions of the righteous in the opening of this Book, therefore I shall not stay upon it here. Only take notice that the righteous may come into fetters, *&c.* not only for tryall of their graces, but for the punishment of their iniquities ; they possibly have not kept close to the bands of duty, and therefore God brings them into the bands of calamity. As wicked men say in the pride and stoutness of their hearts, (*Psal.* 2. 3.) *Come, let us break their bands, and cast their cords from us* ; that is, those bands of duty and cords of obedience which the Gospel layeth upon them; So, in

in a degree, good men, righteous men, may throw off the cords of obedience, and the bands of duty, through the violence of corruption and temptation, walking looſely & vainly for a ſeaſon, they may break the bands of the Goſpel Covenant, and the cords of the Commandement, and when they do ſo, God will not ſpare them, but will throw them even into the bands of trouble and into the cords of affliction; they ſhall know the fetters and bands of affliction, threatned in the Law, when they have not carefully kept to the rule of the Law.

Secondly, Taking the righteous in that ſpecial capacity, for ſuch as were once exalted, and in high place, or as 'tis ſaid in the former verſe, *With Kings on the Throne*, and finding them here in fetters and bands, Note,

The worldly ſtate of good, of righteous men, as well as others, is ſubject to change.

For though that text ſaith, *He eſtabliſheth them*, yet it is not to be underſtood that God doth ſo eſtabliſh righteous men in their places, that they can never be put out of them, or ſo exalt them, that they ſhall never be pulled down; that text ſheweth what God can do, he can exalt them ſo, that they ſhall not be removed for ever, and he often exalts them ſo, but he doth not ſo alwayes; for the outward eſtates of good men may have as great changes, as the outward eſtate of wicked men have: they may come from thrones to priſons, and from chaines of gold to fetters of Iron. There have been many ſuch changes as to the things of the world, even to thoſe that are not of the world; And as Heathen Princes and Kings have often found ſuch changes, ſo alſo did ſeveral of the Kings of *Judah*, they were brought from the throne to the priſon. *Zedekiah* and *Jeckoniah* and *Manaſſeh*, had ſuch ſad changes; when they highly provoked God, they came from their Thrones to the priſon, from a Crown to the cords of affliction; yea this hath been the lot of many other righteous men exalted, they have been brought to the priſon, and laid very low in this world. *Solomon* ſaith of one, (*Eccleſ.* 4. 14.) *Out of priſon he cometh to reigne*, and of another he ſaith in the ſame verſe, *He alſo that is borne in his Kingdome becometh poor*; ſuch viciſſitudes and revolutions come over the heads of the children of men, yea good men are not exempted from ſuch changes and revolutions. Therefore be not

not offended if at any time you ſee good men in chaines and fetters, in a condition of great affliction.

Thirdly, From the manner of expreſſion, *When they are bound in fetters, and holden in cords*. Affliction is ſet forth and deſcribed by *cords* and *fetters*.

Hence note;

Afflictions are grievous to the fleſh.

Are not fetters ſo? are not cords ſo? The word here tranſlated *cords*, is ſeveral times in Scripture applyed to ſignifie the pains of a woman in travel; thoſe are moſt dolorous paines; ſuch are ſome afflictions. The Apoſtle ſpeaking of affliction in generall, (*Heb.* 12. 11.) ſaith, *No chaſtning for the preſent ſeemeth to be joyous, but grievous*. 'Tis no eaſie thing to be in fetters and cords, to be bound in chaines. Afflictions ſtreighten, and preſs, pinch & gall like fetters, they burthen the fleſh, they are no light matters. Though the Apoſtle, comparatively to the weight of glory, calleth the heavieſt outward afflictions *light*, (2 *Cor.* 4. 17.) yet firſt, in themſelves; and ſecondly, to our fleſh, they are very heavy. Therfore we ſhould pity thoſe that are in affliction, as thoſe that are in fetters and cords, and we ſhould pray for thoſe that are in affliction, as for thoſe that are bound. Every affliction is a kind of captivity: *If they be bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction*; thus it may be with the righteous. But is not this an argument that God hates them? ſurely no; we read the mind of God towards them notwithſtanding this in the next verſe.

Verſ. 9. *Then he ſheweth them their work;*

That is, when they are in cords and fetters. But did he never ſhew them their work before? yes, doubtleſs he did; but then eſpecially and effectually, then he ſheweth, he declareth, he makes manifeſt to them, or he cauſeth them to ſee and know their work. The word in that conjugation ſignifieth, not barely to *ſhew*, but to make them *ſee, underſtand* and *conſider* their work; he brings them to a review of what they have done, and to ſee that they have done amiſs. *Then he ſheweth*; it is a ſhewing with power, an *efficacious ſhewing, he ſheweth them their work*. What work? this their work may be conſidered two wayes.

Firſt, As to the matter of it, what they had done. Till we ſee what

what we have done, we repent not of what we have done, how much soever it ought to be repented of; as the Lord complained of *Israel* by the Prophet (*Jer.* 8. 6.) *No man repented of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?*

Secondly, As to the viciousness or falseness of it, *He sheweth them their work*, that is, either what they had done which was evil in the matter of it, or what they had done in an evil manner, though in it self good; he sheweth them the evil of their work, the irregularity, the crookedness, and sinfulness of their work. That this is the meaning, appeareth plainly in the words that follow, *Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgression*; that is, that there is some transgression or fault, possibly many faults and transgressions, in their work. *Then he sheweth them their work.*

Hence Note,

First, *Sin is properly the work of man*;

That is, of the flesh in man (*Gal.* 5. 19.) *The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery*, &c. Good is Gods work in us, evil is our work against the mind of God. Sin is often called the work of our hands, (*Psal.* 28. 4.) *Give them after the work of their hands, render to them their desert*; that is, what they have deserved by their sins. *Moses* declared his fear and holy jealousie concerning the children of *Israel* in this Language, (*Deut.* 31. 29.) *I know that after my departure, ye will utterly corrupt your selves, because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger by the work of your hands.* Idolatry is specially called the work of mans hands, because Idolaters either worship that as a god, or God by that, which their hands have wrought (*Rev.* 9. 20.) *They repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship Devils, and Idols of Gold, and Silver, and Brasse*, &c. Yet Idolatry is much more the work of the heart, than of the hand. And as Idolatry, so any other sin, whether of heart or tongue, may be called the work of our hand, it being that which is most properly our work, though originally the Devils work. As to pardon sin, is properly the work of God, so to commit sin, is properly the work of man. There is no work so much ours, as that; no work properly ours, but bad work; all the good we do, is the work of God in us, or by us.

Secondly

Secondly, Note;

Man doth not see the falseness and faultiness of his own work, till God sheweth it him.

There may be many cracks and flaws in our good works, which we perceive not, we are ready to think and say, *All's well*, we have done very well, until God lets us see our work in his light, in the light of his Word and Spirit; and then we shall see cause to be humbled for those works which we were proud of, and sometimes boasted in. The Prophet (*Haggai* 1. 5.) called the *Jews* to *consider their ways*; they saw their wayes, but they considered not their wayes, and therefore they saw not the evil and error of their wayes. As we see many of the works of God, yet see not the excellency or admirable contrivance of them, till himself sheweth it; so we see many of our own works, yet we see not the sinfulness, vanity, and folly that is in them, till God shew it unto us; *he maketh us see our work as it is.*

Thirdly, From the circumstance of time, when it is that the Lord sheweth unto man his work, the falseness of his work; the Text saith, *Then he sheweth them their work*, that is, when they *are bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction.*

Hence Note;

The badness or sinfulness of our works, is most usually, and most clearly discovered to us in times of affliction; then sheweth he them their work.

Josephs Brethren did a very ill work in selling him into *Egypt*, and in putting off their Father with a lye; yet they took little notice of this work for many years; but when they were bound in fetters, and holden in the cords of affliction, when they came down into *Egypt* for Corn, and were in great streights, through the policy of their Brother to discover them, not out of any design to hurt them, *Then they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our Brother* (Gen. 42. 21.) And (*vers.* 22.) *Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear? therefore behold also his blood is required*: Then their sin appeared to them in bloody colours, then that sinfulness of their work appeared to them, which they saw not before. *Affliction is a dark condition, yet it brings*

much light into the soul: Affliction brings light to discover our works of darknesse, that is, the sinfulnesse of our works; troubles make Comments upon our works, afflictions expound our actions, and shew where the error of them is. We are usually very blind to see or discern a fault in our selves, or in what we have done, untill God openeth our eyes, by laying a crosse upon our backs; *Then he sheweth them their work*,

And their transgressions that they have exceeded.

Here we see (as was touch't before) what kind of works they are which God sheweth them in affliction; works of transgression, or the transgression of their works. The Vulgar Latine renders the Text by a harder word, *Their wickednesses*, or *villanies*. Others by a word of no lesse, if not of a more hard and harsh signification, *He sheweth them their prevarication*; as if they had dealt cunningly and treacherously with God, not plainly, clearly, and above board, as if they had used tricks and policies very much unbecoming righteous persons. Most give it a more easie title (as we) translating by a word that will comply with any sin, *transgression*; every sin, the least sin is a transgression; *Sin is a transgression of the Law* in the very nature of it; and taking the word in this lowest, and most favourable notion,

Stekna eorum. Vulg.

Nomen hoc usurpatur etiam de levioribus culpis. Drus.

Observe;

God will not spare, he will not spare the righteous for their transgressions, or lesser faults, if they do not judge and humble themselves;

If their sins be but slips, the Lord will make them know what they have done.

But there seemeth to be a great aggravation in the Text, upon these transgressions, which more than intimates that they are no small ones; for 'tis added, *And their transgressions*,

That they have exceeded.

Some read the words in the Present Tense, or time, *He sheweth them their transgressions, when they exceed or prevail*: As if the meaning were, God doth not suffer the sins of righteous persons to grow too potent and prevalent upon them, but takes them in time, and nips their sins in the bud, when he sees they begin to grow

grow strong upon them, least if let alone, they might be foyled by them, and so fall into open scandal, or be hardly with-drawn from them. It is no easie thing to master and mortifie a lust, when once it hath got head, and therefore it is a very gracious work of God, to shew a man his sin convincingly, and humble him for it, when he perceives it rising in strength. This is a pious sense and profitable. We read it in the past time,

When they have exceeded.

That is, when these righteous persons have exceeded much in their transgressions. As much as to say, when they have sinned exceedingly, or when their sins are many and great, when (according to the Hebrew) they are waxen mighty, then the Lord sees it high time to deal with them.

The word which we render *exceeded*, comes from a root that signifieth a *strong, or mighty man*, and in the Verb, *to act strongly and mightily*; as if *Elihu* had said, He sheweth them that they have sinned like Giants and mighty men, they have sinned greatly, grievously. And 'tis possible for those that are righteous in their state to sin greatly; not only to transgresse, but to exceed in their transgressions, *that they have exceeded*. יתגברו

Hence Note,

First, *There is an excessiveness, or an exceedingness in some sins.*

All men sin, but the sins of all men, at least all the sins of all good men, do not exceed; they are not all of a high stature, they are not all strong and *mighty sins*, as the Lord by his Prophet called those of *Israel* (Amos 5. 12.) We usually distinguish of sins; some are sins in the excesse, and some in the defect; Prodigality is a sin in the excess, and Parcimony is a sin in the defect; Superstition is a sin in the excess, when men will worship God more than he requires, or in what he requires not; Prophaneness, or neglect of Worship, as also negligence in Worship, are sins in defect. Thus some sins are in the excess, others in the defect, yet every transgression hath a kind of excess in it, and some are exceedingly excessive. And because when any exceedingly exceed in sinning, their sins may be said to reign; therefore (I suppose) Mr. *Broughton* translates this Text so, *And that their trespasses reigned.* For, though as to a course of sin, it is incon-

sistent with the state of a righteous man, that sin should reigne in him, yet as to this or that act it may reigne; sin may reigne over, and bring under a godly man by the violence of a present temptation, though it cannot reigne over him (as it doth over the wicked) by a willing submission. As the best sin alwayes, so sometimes they have sinned greatly, they have exceeded. *Davids* sin exceeded, his sin, as to that act, master'd and reigned over him. *Solomons* sin exceeded, when in his old age his wives turned away his heart to other gods, (1 *Kings* 11. 4.) And *Peters* sin exceeded, when he denied his Master. The righteous are not exempt from a particular reigne of sin, though through grace, they are delivered from the reigne of any the least particular sin. As there is no kind, so no degree of sin, but a godly man may fall into it, except that against the holy Ghost, and totall Apostacy from his profession.

Secondly, God sheweth them *that they have exceeded*, that's it which God sheweth them in their affliction.

Hence observe;

Many see their sin, that do not see the exceedingness of their sin, or that they have exceeded in sin.

Not only natural and carnal men, who see that they have sinned, do not at all see the exceedingness of their sin, but some good men see that they have sinned, but see not presently the exceeding, no nor half, the evil of their sin; therefore, saith *Elihu, He sheweth them their transgression, that they have exceeded. Paul* before his conversion, knew that he had sinned, but he knew not the sinfulness of his sin, which yet afterwards was to him exceeding sinfull, (*Rom.* 7. 13.) As it is the height of our corruption to commit sins exceeding sinfull, so it is a very high poynt of grace, to see the exceeding sinfulness of our sin.

You will say, how is it that sin doth exceed, or wherein consists the exceedingness of it? I answer,

First, There is an exceedingness of sin, in the strength that it hath over us, when it doth easily command and prevaile, then we sin exceedingly, o. then sin is exceeding sinfull, it hath got a mighty hand over us. O how sadly do the sins of many exceed thus! they are held down by their corruptions as slaves and captives, they cannot get themselves out from under the power of a base lust.

lust. As the devil leads some, so lusts and corruptions lead others captive at their will, they are at the beck and command of sin. Thus sin exceeds in the wicked, who either know not God, or who walk daily contrary to their knowledge.

Secondly, That man doth exceed in his transgression, or his transgression doth exceed, who sins with, or hath a very ill frame of heart in sinning. Many a good man falls into sin, and yet he hath not, as I may say, a base or wicked frame of heart in sinning, but his very sinning is, upon the matter, against his own heart, and the bent of his spirit, his heart goeth not with it. The more of the heart or will is mingled with any sin, the more exceeding sinfull it is. I may say of some men (I would not be mistaken) *That they do evill with a better frame of heart, than others do good*; there are some that do good with very bad, yea with base hearts; *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; how much more when he brings it with a wicked mind*, or (as we put in the Margin) *with wickedness*, (Pro. 21. 27.) that is, either for applause, to be seen of men, or for profit, to gain by men, or in malice, the better to compass revenge upon any man, or sort of men; under all which covers, wicked men have brought their sacrifices, that is, have appeared in the outward worship of God, or have taken up the form of godliness. And whosoever doth thus, hath a far worse frame of heart in doing good, than a good man hath in doing evil: who though he doth evil, yet he delights not in it, and closes not with it. By how much any mans heart is more taken with sin, by so much the more sinfull it is.

Thirdly, The exceedingness of a sin may be measured by the circumstances of sinning; then a man may be said to transgress, and exceed in transgression, when he sinneth, First, against light, against the checks of his own conscience within; as also, Secondly, when he sins against reproofs, warnings, and admonitions from without; that man exceeds in sin, who hath been told of it, and yet goeth on. Thirdly, that man exceeds in sin, who sins in the midst of much mercy, and daily received or renewed favours; as also he, Fourthly, who sins in the midst of many afflictions and judgements, whether upon his person and family, or upon the Nation where he liveth: such as these not only sin or transgress, but exceed in transgression. Now the Lord in times of affliction sheweth men these and the like exceedings of their transgression,

and

and causeth them to confess, not only that they are sinners, and have transgressed, but they are brought upon their knees to confess, that they have exceeded in transgression. And when this is done, the Lord goeth on yet further to perfect the work of humiliation and repentance, while they are *bound in fetters, and holden in the cords of affliction*; for then, as it followeth,

Vers. 10. *He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.*

Still 'tis Gods work, *he sheweth* before, and here, *he openeth*: as in the former verse he openeth their eyes to see, so in this he openeth their ear to hear.

He openeth their ear.

גלה *Revelavit occulta & abscondita: revelatio aurem notat intimam insinuationem.*

This latter is more than the former, this opening the *ear to discipline*, is more than a *shewing of sin*, and the exceeding sinfulness of it: Opening the ear, imports a close and home-discovery of a mans condition to him, (*Psal.* 51. 6.) *David*, after his great sin, perceived the Lord shewing him, or making him to understand wisdome secretly.

He openeth also their ear.

The word which we translate, *to open*, properly signifieth *to reveale*; and, in Scripture phrase, the ear is said to be *revealed*, or *uncovered*, when a secret is brought to us, (1 *Sam.* 20. 2.) *Jonathan* said to *David*, *God forbid, thou shalt not die; behold my father will do nothing, either great or small, but that he will shew it me*, (or *uncover my ear*) *and why should my father hide this thing from me? Saul* also used the same Hebraisme, or forme of speech, when he upbrayded his servants with their unfaithfulness to him; What, saith he, hath the son of *Jesse* such preferments for you? and are you all so corrupted in your loyalty to me, *that all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me*, (or *uncovereth my ear*) *that my son hath made a League with the son of Jesse*, (*Sam.* 22. 8.) Will none of you *uncover my ear?* that is, discover the plot that is contrived for my ruine? Then the ear is said to be opened or uncovered, when any secret is made known to the mind; as was further shewed at the 16th verse of the 33d Chapter, where *Elihu* used this expression; and therefore I shall not

Loquitur de auro cordis & mentis. Scitum illud; Mens audit, mens videt, cætera surda et cæca sunt. Drus:

not return to that matter, but referre the Reader thither. Only consider to what, or for what, the Lord is said to open the ear. In the 33d Chapter *Elihu* told us, that when the eyes of men are shut (deep sleep being fallen upon them) *he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction*. Here *Elihu* saith, God having men under the rod, *he openeth also their ear*

To discipline.

למוסר *Ad castigationem, i.e. Ne castigatio sit ei absq; fructu, vel ut ista disciplinæ seu correctioni emendentur.* Pisc:

The Hebrew word is of the same extraction in both places; Instruction is for discipline, and discipline tends unto instruction. It is often rendred, *chastisement*, and generally signifies any severer course of instruction or education, whereby we are drawn off from evil and unto good. When *Elihu* saith, *He openeth their ear to discipline*, we may understand it two wayes.

First, To fit them for instruction, and counsel; they heard (possibly) before, but not with an *open*, that is, a ready and obedient ear. The ear is shut, though we hear much, unless we submit and conforme to what we hear. The ear seldome opens fully till the Lord smites, as well as speaks, and gives us both a word and a blow.

Secondly, *He openeth their ear to discipline*, that is, to hearken what Gods chastening or correction speakes, or what he speaks by his chastning. The Lord would not have his chastnings unprofitable, nor his rods without fruit to us, and therefore *he openeth the ear to discipline*, and sheweth us the meaning of such a crosse or sickness, of such a loss or affliction; *He openeth their ear to discipline.*

Hence note;

First, *It is a special power of God which helps us to understand his mind, either in his Word or in his Works.*

We neither understand the dealings nor sayings of God, if left to our selves: the heart of man is shut, his ear is deaf, the ear of his heart (that's the ear here intended) till God say (as in the Gospel to the bodily ear) *Ephatha, Be thou opened*, (Pro. 20. 12.) *The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord is the maker of them both*: That's a great truth; First, of the sensitive ear and eye; 'tis the Lord who hath made the one to hear, and the other to see, as he told *Moses* (Exod. 4. 11.) and as 'tis said, (*Psal.* 94. 19.)

Secondly,

Secondly, 'tis as true if understood of the intellectual eye and ear; the hearing ear and seeing eye, that is, the ear that heareth obediently and practically, that ear is of Gods forming and making; such an ear did God create (*Acts* 16. 14.) where it is said, *A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the City of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things that were spoken by Paul.*

Further, what was the season of opening the ear? It was a day of affliction, when they were bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction.

Hence learn;

God useth afflictions as medicines or means to restore spiritual hearing.

Man is often cured of his spiritual deafness, both as to the voyce of the word and workes of God, by sickness. A good man in health, peace, & prosperity, may have his ears so stopped that the Lord sees it needful to send some sharp correction to get out the ear-wax and unlock them. *Prosperity* (saith one of the Ancients) *is the gift of God comforting us; adversity is the gift of God admonishing us; why then dost thou complain that thou sufferest, thy suffering is a medicament, not a punishment; 'tis for thy bettering, not for thy undoing.* 'Tis a favour to feel God striking, when we have not heard him speaking, and he therefore strikes that we may attend what he speaks; When words do not prevaile to open the ear, fetters and cords shall. That's the second designe of God when he brings the righteous into streights, *Then he openeth their ear to discipline:* The third is given in the close of this verse;

Res prospera donum est dei consolantis, res adversa est donum dei admonentis; quod igitur pateris, unde plangis; medicina est, non pœna; castigatio non damnatio. August: in Psal: 102.

Qui jubentis verba non audiunt, ferientis verberibus admonentur; ut ad bona æterna pœnæ trahant, quos præmia non invitant. Greg: l. 26. Moral. c. 26.

ויאמר *et dicit.*

And commandeth that they return from iniquity.

Here's the issue of the former two: The shewing them their transgressions, the opening their ear, are that they may *return from iniquity*; and here is a command that they must; *And commandeth that they return*, &c. The Hebrew text may be rendred, *He speaketh, or saith, that they return from iniquity*; and this speaking may be expounded two wayes; First, *by perswading*; He speaks perswadingly. The Lords afflictions are perswasions, his stroaks are entreaties; he beseecheth us by our sorrows, and sicknesses, and weaknesses, and pains, that we would *return from our iniquity*. Secondly, we take speaking or saying in the highest straine, He speaks by commanding, he speaks authoritatively; Thus we render, *He commandeth*. The command of God is twofold; First, formal or express, when God gives the rule in so many words. Secondly, vertual. The command of God (I conceive) is here to be understood in this latter sense. When the Lord afflicteth the righteous, he vertually commands, or sends out his Edict, that they *return from their iniquity*. The word *return*, implyes them formerly following some iniquity, & gone far from the Lord: This returning is repenting all the Scripture over. I need say no more of that. As by sin we turn from God, so by repentance, we return from iniquity; and as the Lord at all times commands the righteous by his word, so they even force him sometimes to command them by his rod, which is called discipline in the former part of the verse, because sinners feel paine, and find matter to learn, all at once. *He commandeth that they return from iniquity.*

The word rendred *iniquity*, signifies a vain, empty thing, a thing of nought: so the Chaldee paraphraseth it here, *He commands that they return from their evil works, which are like to vanity, and a thing of nought.* What is sin, but a kind of nothing? we look for great matters from sin, but it is a vanity, it is (like an Idol) *nothing in the world*, that is, it is not such a thing as it doth import, or as it promiseth, or as the opinion of men make it to be; Iniquity is no such thing as it pretendeth, or as is pretended. *The Lord commandeth that they return from iniquity*; that is, from doing that which will profit them nothing at all, or no more than a vaine thing, a thing of nothing can. And yet though iniquity be nothing good or profitable, yet 'tis all things evil and hurtfull, nor had any thing ever hurt us or been evil to us, had it not been for iniquity. *He commandeth that they return from iniquity.*

אין *habet significationem nihili.* — *Ab operibus suis malis, quæ similia sunt vanitati & nihilo.* Chald:

Hence Note;

First, *Affliction hath a voyce; God speaks loudly to us by affliction;*

He speaks to us as loud in his works, as he doth in his word; he trumpets to us, he thunders to us in his works: God speaks aloud, but sweetly, to us in his works of mercy, he speaks aloud, but terribly, to us in his works of judgement.

 Secondly,

Secondly, Seeing, as was touched in opening the words, this command is not to be taken for a ſtanding Law, for ſo God alwayes commands men to return from iniquity, but the command here is a renewed act or a ſpecial diſpenſation, there is, as it were, a freſh command iſſued, when a man is under the afflicting hand of God.

Hence Note;

God reinforceth or reneweth his command to return from ſin, as often as he reneweth our afflictions.

That we return from iniquity, is a ſtanding, an everlaſting Law, but when we are in affliction, then there is, as it were, a freſh Edition of the command, 'tis, as I may ſay, new printed and proclaimed, the fetters print this command upon our heels, and the cords upon our hands, that we *return from iniquity*.

Thirdly, Note;

Iniquity is a vaine thing, it is a nothing.

Shall we not then return from it? one would think a little perſwaſion might ſerve the turn to haſten our return from a nothing, and ſhall not a command do it? when I ſay a nothing, remember, (as was ſhewed) ſin is no ſuch thing as you look upon it to be: where are the profits that you have reaped by ſin? where are the contents and pleaſures that you have taken by ſin? the profit, the pleaſure, and content of ſin are nothing, there is no advantage to be had by ſin. Sin is ſomething in the ill effects of it; if you would have paine, and diſhonour, and reproach, you may have enough of it in ſin, and you will find ſin a ſomething in that ſenſe; but ſin is a nothing, that is, no ſuch thing as you expect and look for, and therefore be perſwaded to return from it.

Laſtly, From the whole text take notice of the purpoſe of God, what he hath in his heart, when he afflicteth his people, the righteous, for their iniquities and faylings, for their faults and uneven walkings. The ſcope of God in all this, is not their hurt, but good; it is not to deſtroy them for their ſin, but to deſtroy their ſin; it is not to withdraw himſelf from them, but to draw them nearer to himſelf; all the hurt that the Lord intends us by any affliction, is but to get out our droſs, and to fetch out our filth, to bring us off from thoſe things that will undo and ruine us for ever.

ever. And how great an argument of the goodneſs of God is it, that he deſigneth the evils which we ſuffer in theſe dying bodies, to heal the evils, and help on the good of our immortal ſouls! that's all the hurt that the Lord means us. And the Lords heart is ſo much in this deſign (the return of thoſe he afflicts from their iniquity) that he ſeems confident of it, that when any are in affliction, ſurely they will return, (*Hoſea* 5. 15.) *In their affliction they will ſeek me early*, ſurely they will. And therefore the Prophet ſpeaks of the Lord as defeated and diſappointed of his purpoſe, when he ſeeth ſuch as he hath afflicted continuing in their ſin, (*Iſa.* 9. 13.) *The people turneth not unto him that ſmiteth them, neither do they ſeek the Lord of Hoſts*: As if he had ſaid, 'Tis a wonder, that being ſmitten they have not returned; what a ſtrange, what a croſs-grain'd people are theſe! What? doth the Lord ſmite you that you ſhould run farther from him, and follow your iniquity cloſer, or hold it faſter? you may be aſhamed that you turn not unto him that ſpeaks to you; but when you are ſmitten will you not return from iniquity? remember, the Lord therefore ſuffers you to be bound in fetters, that you may be looſed from your ſins; he therefore ſuffers you to be holden in the cords of affliction, that you might let go your tranſgreſſions. Take heed you be not found diſappointing him of his purpoſe. How well it will be with thoſe who do not diſappoint him, and how ill 'tis like to be with ſuch as do, will appear further and fully in the two next verſes.

JOB, Chap. 36. Vers. 11, 12.

11. *If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their dayes in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.*

12. *But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.*

IN the former Context we heard, what the blessed designes of God are upon the righteous, when they are bound in fetters, and holden in the cords of affliction, namely, to convince them of their sin, to fit them for the receiving of Instruction, and to bring them clear off from iniquity.

In these two verses *Elihu* proceedeth to shew what the issue of those afflictions will be, in a double respect or case.

First, In case the afflicted come up to and answer the forementioned designes of God; that is, if they take knowledge of their sin, if their ears be opened to Instruction, if they return from iniquity; what then? he tells us (*v.* 11.) *If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their dayes in prosperity, and their years in pleasures*; that shall be the issue, the blessed issue of all the afflictions with which they were exercised.

Secondly, He shews us how those afflictions will issue in case the afflicted come not up to those designes of God, in case they are not brought to a knowledge of sin, nor receive instruction, nor return from iniquity; what then? he tells us that (*v.* 12.) *if they obey not* (this will be the consequent of their obstinacy) *they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.* We have a parallel Scripture to this almost in terms, (*Isa.* 1. 19. 20.) *If ye hear and obey, ye shall eat the good of the Land, but if ye refuse and rebell, ye shall be devoured with the sword.* This text not only carries the sense, but almost the words, by which *Elihu* expresseth both the Lords pleasure and displeasure in this place to *Job*.

Vers. 11. *If they obey*, or *hear*,

That is, take out the lesson taught them; if they do that which the affliction teacheth them, or which God teacheth by their affliction, by their cords and fetters, *then*, &c. The same word is frequently in Scripture used for *obeying* and *hearing*, (*Psal.* 81. 8, 11, 13. *Psal.* 95. 7.) To what purpose is our hearing the will of God without obedience to it? When young *Samuel* said at the Lord's call, *Speak, for thy servant heareth*, (1 *Sam.* 3. 10.) his meaning was, Lord, I am ready to do what thou speakest. We hear no more than we obey, and therefore obeying and hearing may well be expresst by the same word. The text is plain, I shall only give this Note, and pass on;

It is our duty to hear and obey when-ever God calls or speakes, either in his word or in his works.

That which this text holds out specially is the voice of God in his works, what God speakes by Fetters, what he speakes by Cords. If ever we hear and obey the voice of the Lord, it should be when he teacheth us (as *Gideon* taught the men of *Succoth*, *Judg.* 8. 16.) *with thornes and briars of the wilderness*. O let us take care of hearing and obeying this voice. For First, God is the Lord, and therefore to be obeyed. Secondly, God is a Soveraign Lord, and therefore much more to be obeyed. Thirdly, As all the Commands, so all the Chastisements of God are just and righteous, therefore they are most of all to be obeyed. Fourthly, To obey the Commands of God, whether taught us in his Word or by his Rod, is good, yea best for us, therefore we should obey for our own good. *If they obey*

And serve him, or *worship him*.

The word which here we render *to serve*, is very often in Scripture rendred *to worship*, and sometimes worshipping is expounded by serving, (*Mat.* 4. 10.) *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him onely shalt thou serve*; that also is the mind of the Text, *If they obey and serve him.*

עבד *Religio at numinis cultus est. Servitus quædam.*

Hence note;

The Lord expects our service, and then especially, when we suffer.

Religion and the Worship of God, in the whole compass of it, is nothing else but service, a blessed service, a free service, a service infinitely more free than any thing the world calls freedom.

(*Exod.* 4. 23.) *Let my Son go that he may ſerve me*, that is, *worſhip me*. All the Sons of God are his Servants, and they have moſt of the Son in them who have moſt of the Servant in them. If any deny him ſervice they deny their ſonſhip, or rather (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of *Non-ſufferers* in one kind or other, *Heb.* 12. 8.) *They are baſtards, not ſons*; yea, God expects whole and all ſervice from us, or that we ſhould ſerve him with our all, (*Deut.* 10. 12.) *Thou ſhalt ſerve the Lord thy God with all thy heart*. We muſt ſerve the Lord, not only with the beſt we have, but with all the beſt, with the heart, and all the heart. We ſerve God no further than we obey him, and we worſhip him no further than we ſerve him, and that heartily.

To ſerve God, (as to love God) is a very comprehenſive word, 'tis the ſumme of all the duty of Man. To ſerve God is to ſubmit both to what he commands us, and to what he layeth upon us. To ſerve God is to ſubmit to what he would have us do, and to whatſoever he is pleaſed to do with us; and ſo we ſerve him particularly under ſufferings: We ſhould alwayes ſerve him actively, and we are called ſometimes to ſerve him paſſively. All Believers are free, and yet they muſt ſerve; and they are made free on purpoſe to ſerve: We are purchaſed by the blood of Chriſt, that we might ſerve him. *Becauſe we are bought with a price, we muſt not be the ſervants of men*, ſaith the Apoſtle, (1 *Cor.* 7. 23.) Whoſe ſervants then? Surely the ſervants of God. We are conquered that we might ſerve. The *Latines* ſay, that a *Servant is one that is ſaved in War, taken and ſaved*. So it is with all the people of God, they are taken in the holy war, they are taken priſoners, and ſo made ſervants to Jeſus Chriſt. Yet Believers are ſervants, not only by conqueſt, but compact and covenant; every godly man hath, as it were, ſealed Indentures with God, he hath (upon the matter) put his ear to the Lords poſt to be boared thorow, (as you read, *Exod.* 21. 6.) that he may be his ſervant for ever. The Lord expects ſervice.

Servus tunquam in bello ſervatus.

But what is it to ſerve him?

Firſt, To ſerve him is to do his Will.

Secondly, To ſerve him is to do his whole Will. It is not the doing of this or that piece of the Will of God, or this or that patch of the Will of God, which renders us his ſervants; but the doing his whole Will.

Third-

Thirdly, To ſerve him is to do his Will only; ſo ſaith the Scripture, *Him only ſhalt thou ſerve*. If it may be ſuppoſed, that we could do the whole Will of God, and yet do the will of any other, or do our own will too, in any thing contrary to his, we were not his ſervants; if we ſerve him not alone, or if we ſerve him not only, that is, if in ſerving man we aim not chiefly at the ſerving of him, or if all our ſervices to men are not ſubſervient, or not in ſubordination to the ſervice of God, we ſerve him not at all.

Fourthly, I may add this alſo, To ſerve God is to do every thing under this contemplation, that, what we do is the Will of God. 'Tis very poſſible for a man to do that which is the Will of God, and yet not to ſerve him in doing it; which we never do till we do it becauſe it is the Will of God. His Will muſt be not only the Rule of what we do, but the very Reaſon why we do it, elſe our doings are not his ſervings. They that do not attend this, ſerve God but as a beaſt may ſerve him, a beaſt may do that which is the Will of God; the inanimate creatures ſerve him ſo; We hear of *ſtormy winds and tempeſts fulfilling his Will*, (*Pſal.* 148.) All living, yea, liveleſs creatures do that which is his Will, but they do not attend this, that it is his Will which they do. So that, I ſay, to do his Will, not conſidering that it is his Will, is to ſerve him no otherwiſe than beaſts, or than the winds or ſtormes ſerve him: And to do his Will, ayming at our own wills or ends, is to ſerve him but as a hypocrite ſerves him. A hypocrite doth not ſerve God in what he doth, though he doth many things which are materially the Will of God, becauſe in all he minds his own will more than the Will of God.

Laſtly, We muſt ſerve God as Sons, (*Mal.* 3. 17.) A Son ſerveth no leſs than a Servant, yea much more, though not as a ſervant; for he knoweth more of his Fathers mind than a meer ſervant doth (*Joh.* 15. 15.) and he knoweth, that he ſhall have alſo, though not Wages at the end of every day, yet the inheritance in the end. *Obadiah* was the proper name of one good man, and it is a name common to all good men; they are (as that word imports) *Servants of the Lord*. It is a common Theam to urge men *to ſerve God*, but it is a rare thing to be indeed a ſervant of God. To ſerve God is the Summe and Marrow of all knowledge

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in divinity, and the great end why we came into this World and for which we are here detained. Nor is it an eaſie matter to come up to, or attain the holy skill of ſerving ſuch a Lord and Maſter as he: There muſt be a doing of his Will, and of his whole Will, and of his Will only, and that under this preciſe contemplation, that it is his Will, to denominate us his ſervants, or to make a proof that we ſerve him.

Now whether God teacheth us by his Word, or by his Rod (which is the teaching of this context) O how readily ſhould we obey and ſerve him! To ſerve him is not only the deſign of our being made free, that is, we were not onely made free to ſerve him, but to ſerve him is our freedom (as was touch't before) yea, to ſerve him is not onely to be free, but to ſerve him is to reign and rule. They that ſerve God to purpoſe reign over the luſts of the evil World without, and over their own luſts within; nor can any reign over the luſts of the world without, or their own within, but only they who ſerve him, and only ſo far as they ſerve him. Every gracious act of ſervice to God is the ſubjugation or bringing under of ſome luſt or other in man.

Now if any ſhould ſay, ſurely this is a very ſad Life, to be alwayes ſerving, or to lead only the life of a ſervant.

I anſwer, To ſerve God, or the ſervice of God is ſweet, pleaſant and eaſie in a twofold reſpect. Firſt, comparatively, to the ſervice of ſin and the world, of luſt and the devil; that's a wearineſs indeed as well as a baſeneſs. Secondly, It is eaſie alſo if we conſider the help we have in it. The people of God ſerve him in a Covenant of Grace, which, as it calls them to work, ſo it gives them help to work. The New Covenant doth not call us (as *Pharaoh* did the children of *Iſrael*) to make brick and deny us ſtraw; yea, under that Covenant, we have not onely ſtraw afforded us to make our brick, but we have ſtrength afforded us to make our brick; that is, the very power by which we ſerve our Maſter is given in by our Maſter. The Maſters of this world ſet us a work, but they give us no ſtrength, but what work ſoever God ſets his Covenant-ſervants about, he gives them ſtrength to do it. Then, O how ſweet is it to ſerve him, and how readily ſhould our hearts come off in his ſervice! Let me add one thing more (which brings us to the next words) ſerve him, for his is not a lean ſervice, not an unprofitable ſervice, there is a reward

reward promiſed to thoſe who ſerve him; yea, his very ſervice is a reward, his work is wages. Therefore what calls ſoever we have from him let us anſwer and ſerve him. There are two things which ſhould be the daily meditation of Saints, or they ſhould be continually acquainting themſelves with them. Firſt, *The Croſs of Chriſt*, that they may know how, and be willing to ſuffer for him. Secondly, *The Yoak of Chriſt*, that they may know how, and be willing to ſerve him. *If they obey and ſerve him*, What then? even that which was the laſt conſideration provoking us to his ſervice, there is a reward in it, *If they obey and ſerve him*,

They ſhall ſpend their dayes in proſperity and their years in pleaſures.

Here's good wages; who would not ſerve that Maſter who will pay him for his work in that deſireable coyne, Pleaſure and Proſperity! *They ſhall ſpend their dayes in proſperity*, that is, they ſhall run out their dayes in proſperity, their dayes and their proſperity ſhall be like two parallel lines, one as long as the other. The word which we tranſlate *to ſpend*, ſignifies to *finiſh*, and that in a double reſpect; Firſt, in a way of Conſumption; Secondly, in a way of Perfection or Conſummation. That which is conſumed is finiſhed, or ended. So the word is uſed (*Pſal.* 90. 7.) (*Numb.* 16. 45.) The Lord ſaith to *Moſes*, *Go you up from this Congregation, that I may conſume them in a moment*; I will diſpatch them and make an end of them preſently. The Lord can ſoon rid his hand of ſinners. And as it notes a conſuming by ſuddain judgements, by diſeaſes or age, ſo by longing or deſire, (2 *Sam.* 23. 15.) *And David longed* ('tis this word, he was even ſpent and conſumed with a longing deſire) *and ſaid, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate.* Now as that which is conſumed or ſpent, ſo that which is perfected is finiſhed. Thus, *Moſes* having ſet down the particulars of the whole work of Creation ſummes all up in this word, (*Gen.* 2. 1, 2.) *Thus the heavens and the Earth were finiſhed, and all the hoſt of them*; that is, God compleated or brought that great work of Creation to its utmoſt perfection, he put (as we may ſpeak) his laſt hand to it, there was nothing more to be added. Here in the text we are to take this word *ſpend*, not only as it often ſignifies, to ſpend in a way of Conſumption, but alſo to ſpend in a way of Per-

כלה *Significat tum conſumere, tum conſummare, ſignificat etiam conſumi deſiderio, quod dicitur aliquem deperire amore.*

Perfection, they ſhall perfect, not barely wear out their dayes. A godly man hath not ſo much conſumed as perfected the dayes of his life, when he is come to and hath ended the laſt day of his life. *They ſhall ſpend their dayes*

בטוב
In bono, i. e. in omni jucunditate.

In proſperity, or *in good* (ſaith the Original)

Proſperity is a good thing, a good bleſſing of God. They ſhall ſpend their dayes in good, we tranſlate it in the 21 Chapter v. 15. *in wealth*. Wealth alſo is a good bleſſing of God to thoſe that are good, and proſperity takes that in; proſperity is a large word comprehending all good, health and wealth, honour and peace: what-ever we can imagine to render our lives comfortable comes under the name of Proſperity, *They ſhall ſpend their dayes in proſperity, or in good*; this reward *they* ſhall have from the Lord who ſerve him. Is not this good wages? The carnal rich man pleaſed himſelf and ſaid, (*Luke* 12. 19.) *Soul, take thine eaſe, thou haſt goods laid up for many yeares*. The godly do not pleaſe themſelves, that they have goods laid up for many years in their own Stock, in their Lands, in their Houſes, in their Purſes, in their Shops, but they pleaſe themſelves that they have good laid up for many years, yea, for eternity, in the Promiſes of God. They who ſerve him, they ſhall ſpend their dayes in good, they ſhall have good for every day, and ſo finiſh their dayes with good; yet this is not all, *They ſhall ſpend their dayes in proſperity*,

And their years in Pleaſures.

In the former words he promiſed dayes of Good, here years of Pleaſure; as if he had ſaid, they ſhall enjoy their proſperity long, they ſhall not only have Dayes but Years filled up with it. One year containes many dayes, how many dayes of pleaſure are there in years of pleaſure! Our life is meaſured by days to ſhew the ſhortneſs of it; the longeſt meaſure of it is by years; *They ſhall ſpend their years*

בנעימים
In jucundis.
נעם
Affert jucunditatem, delectationem, pulchritudinem,

In Pleaſures, or (as we may read it) *in ſweetneſſes, in pleaſantneſſes, in delicionſneſſes, in beauties.*

The word is uſed (2 *Sam.* 1. 23.) to ſhew the lovelineſs of *Jonathan* and *Saul*, they were a pleaſant pair, a couple of goodly perſons. *They ſhall ſpend their dayes in pleaſantneſs, or in pleaſures.* Further,

Further, Take notice, the word is plural; he doth not ſay, they ſhall *ſpend their dayes in pleaſure*, but *in pleaſures*, implying all ſorts and varieties of pleaſure; in *Songs*, ſaith one; in *Marriage Songs*, ſaith a ſecond; in *graceful Beauties*, ſaith a third; and, which may be all or any of theſe, in *delights*, ſaith a fourth.

rei nobis gratiſſimæ. In Canticis Targ. *in Epithalmiis* Munſt. ἐν εὐπρεπείαις, Sept. *in delectationibus.* Pagn.

But here are two Queſtions that I muſt give anſwer to, for the clearing of this Scripture.

Firſt, The Queſtion may be, *Is this a mercy much to be reckoned upon, to ſpend our years in pleaſure?* ſaith not the Apoſtle (1 Tim. 5. 6.) *The widow that lives in pleaſure is dead while ſhe lives?* If it be a dead life to live in pleaſure, how then is it here promiſed as a favour, as a mercy, to them that obey and ſerve God, that they ſhall ſpend their years in pleaſures?

I anſwer by diſtinguiſhing of pleaſure; pleaſures are of two ſorts. Firſt, lawful and honeſt delights; of ſuch we read (*Gen.* 49. 20.) where dying *Jacob* bleſſing of *Aſher* ſaith, *He ſhall yield royal dainties*, or *pleaſures for a King*; meaning, he ſhall give, not only honeſt, but honourable pleaſures and contentments, ſuch as beſit Kings. Secondly, There are unlawful and diſhoneſt pleaſures, which the Apoſtle calleth (*Heb.* 11. 25.) *the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon*. A wo will be their portion who live in ſuch pleaſures. *Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl* (ſaith the Apoſtle *James*, Chap. 5. 1.) why ſo? among other Reaſons this is given for one (*verſ.* 5.) *Ye have lived in pleaſure*, wantonizing, and gluttonizing, and Epicurizing: in ſuch baſe pleaſures you have lived, therefore wo to you. To live in ſinful or unlawful pleaſures is death and miſery, or a life worſe than death; but to live a life of lawful and honeſt pleaſure is a mercy, the mercy here promiſed, and the very life of our lives.

Dabit delicias regis. Hebr: Mont:

Secondly, We may diſtinguiſh of pleaſures thus; they are either, firſt, Corporal pleaſures, pleaſures of the body, of which we read (*Job* 21. 25.) *One dyeth in his full ſtrength, and another dyeth in the bitterneſs of his Soul, and never eateth in pleaſure*; that is, he hath had no contentment in the body, or no bodily contentment, but was alwayes ſickly, crazy, pining, languiſhing, and ill at eaſe, his life was tedious, even a burden to him, for he could never eat in pleaſure, ſcarce taſt what he did eat. Secondly, There are Spiritual pleaſures (*Pſal.* 36. 8.) *They ſhall drink of the Rivers of thy pleaſures*. *David* ſpeaks there of Saints, what enjoy-

 ments

ments and Joyes they have in the Church or Houſe of God, attending upon him in holy Ordinances. Thirdly, There are eternal pleaſures (*Pſal.* 16. 11.) *In thy preſence is fulneſs of joy, and at thy right hand are pleaſures for evermore.* Such are all the joyes of Heaven, or of a glorified ſtate. Now when *Elihu* ſaith, *they ſhall ſpend their years in pleaſures*, we are not to take it meerly for honeſt corporal pleaſures, for ſuch a life, at beſt, is but the life of a Beaſt; but we are to take theſe corporal pleaſures, either as heightned by better, that is, as ſpiritualiz'd by the ſenſe of the love of God, and mixed with ſpiritual pleaſures; or, for thoſe purely ſpiritual pleaſures which the ſoul finds in communion with God alone (having nothing to do, or no intercourſe with creatures) drinking at the River of his pleaſures in Prayer, in Hearing, in Meditation, in breaking Bread, in Singing. Now to ſpend our dayes, either in theſe purely ſpiritual pleaſures, taking in alſo thoſe corporal pleaſures ſo qualified as before, and duly circumſtantiated, is a high, a very high bleſſing and mercy indeed. So then, here is nothing to feed the fancy of Epicures, here is no promiſe of ſenſual, though of ſenſitive pleaſures, theſe only are pleaſures fit for the Servants of God, theſe pleaſures only become Saints; as for thoſe other pleaſures, Chriſt ſaith of them in the Parable of the Sower (*Luke* 8. 14.) *They choak the Word of God*; and God will not feed his people with ſuch pleaſures, as a reward of ſerving him, as ſhall choak the Word, and unfit them for his ſervice. No, we are to watch againſt, and deny our ſelves ſuch pleaſures, as our Lord Jeſus caution'd his Diſciples (*Luke* 21. 34.) *Take heed, leaſt at any time your hearts be over-charged with ſurfetting, drunkenneſs, and the cares of this life, and ſo that day come upon you unawares.* As if he had ſaid, Take heed of carnal pleaſures, as much as of worldly cares, for as they are alike deſtructive to the preſent purity of the Soul, ſo they alike endanger our future peace, and lay us open to the ſurprize of Judgment. And as ſuch pleaſures ruine the ſtate of the ſoul, ſo of the body too, with which they have neareſt cognation. Hence that of *Solomon* (*Prov.* 21. 17) *He that loveth pleaſure ſhall be a poor man.* There, pleaſure is oppoſed to work or labour: He that is all for taking his pleaſure, and will not follow his Calling, this man comes quickly to poverty, and will dye a Beggar. Suppoſe the pleaſure be lawful, yet if he loves pleaſure, and is at his pleaſure when he ſhould be at his labour, he will ſoon be reduced to a morſel of bread, and become a poor man: But he that loveth unlawful pleaſures, ſhall not only be a poor man, but will prove a wicked man. *Thou that art given to pleaſures* (Iſa. 47. 8.) is the Character of *Babylon*. God gives good men pleaſure, but 'tis the mark of an evil man to be given to pleaſure. They that *love pleaſure, are lovers of pleaſure more than lovers of God* (2 Tim. 3. 4.) and ſuch muſt needs be the worſt of men.

And therefore we are not to underſtand this Text of any ſinful pleaſure, nor of a life meerly lead in lawful pleaſure, that a man ſhould be all upon his pleaſure, and lay aſide his Calling; *Elihu* doth not oppoſe pleaſure to work, labour or buſineſs, but to trouble, ſorrow, and affliction. They that obey and ſerve the Lord ſhall ſpend their years in pleaſures, in honeſt pleaſures, that is, they ſhall live, not only contentedly, but joyfully. The Lord alloweth us to take any honeſt pleaſure while we live, but not to live in pleaſure; he alloweth us to take our delights, but our delights muſt not take us.

There is yet another Query, for it may be ſaid, Is this a truth, that they who obey and ſerve the Lord *ſhall ſpend their dayes in proſperity, and their years in pleaſures?* I anſwer to that,

Firſt, If we take it abſolutely and univerſally, we cannot affirme that every one who ſerveth and obeyeth God, ſhall alwayes have pleaſure, that is, outward comforts and contentments in this world; many of the Lords faithfull ſervants have lived in paine and ſorrow; ſo that *if* (as *David* ſpake in this caſe, *Pſal.* 73. 5.) *we ſhould ſpeak thus, we ſhould offend againſt the generation of his ſervants.* Some flouriſh in grace, who wither in worldly comforts. There is no certain connexion between theſe two, Grace and outward peace or pleaſure; the providences of God vary in this poynt as himſelf pleaſeth. Neither is it true, that the true ſervants of God do uninterruptedly or alwayes enjoy inward pleaſures, comforts and contentments; for he that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voyce of his ſervants, may walk in darkneſs, and trouble of ſpirit, *and ſee no light*, (Iſa. 50. 10.) We are therefore to underſtand this Scripture as others of like nature, of that which is commonly done, or of that which we may upon good ground expect from God, and in faith wait for, that if we ſerve and obey him, he will make our lives comfortable to us. I anſwer,

Secondly,

Secondly, This promiſe, or promiſes of a like nature were fitted to the time wherein *Elihu* ſpake; he ſpake of the times long before Chriſts appearing in the fleſh, when the Lord did, as it were, lead on his people very much by promiſes, of temporal and outward proſperity, of which the Scripture is more ſparing in the new Teſtament, where we are come to the fulneſs of Chriſt, and the riches of the grace of God to us in him; of which there is but little (comparatively) ſpoken in the old Teſtament: And therefore under that darker diſpenſation of ſpirituals, the Lord ſaw it good to encourage that people to obedience by a multitude of very particular outward promiſes, as we may read (*Deut.* 28.) He would bleſs their basket and their ſtore, the fruit of the field, &c. Theſe promiſes were ſuted to the ſtate of that under-age people, who were led on and enticed by viſible and ſenſible bleſſings, as we do children with toyes and Gaudees; and indeed all viſible enjoyments are but ſuch in compariſon of ſpirituals. Believers under the Goſpel being come to a higher ſtate, to fuller attainments, the promiſes made to them run not much in that channel; yet it cannot be denied, that the Goſpel alſo holds out promiſes for temporals, as well as the Law; and this latter diſpenſation of the Covenant as well as the former, hath provided ſufficiently for our outward comforts.

Thirdly, For anſwer, let us conſider the drift of the Spirit of God in this promiſe of pleaſure. *Job* had often complained of his own ſorrowfull condition, and concluded himſelf a man of ſorrow for all the remainder of his dayes: though his faith was ſtrong for the reſurrection of his body after death, yet he had little, if any faith at all, that he ſhould be raiſed out of that miſerable eſtate wherein he was in this life. He alſo had ſpoken ſomewhat raſhly and amiſs concerning the dealings of God with his ſervants in general, as if nothing but trouble and ſorrow, did attend them, and that the wicked went away with all the ſweet and good of this world. Now *Elihu* to take him off from theſe ſad, and almoſt deſpairing thoughts, as to the return of his own comforts, and to reſtifie his judgement in the general poynt, as to the dealings of God with others; he aſſureth *Job*, that if righteous men being bound in fetters, &c. hear and obey, God will break thoſe bonds, and cut the cords of their affliction, *and they ſhall ſpend* (the remainder of) *their dayes in proſperity, and* (the reſt of) *their years in pleaſures.*

pleaſures. So that *Elihu* in holding out this promiſe to *Job*, would rather clear his judgement from an error concerning the laſtingneſs or continuance of his pains and ſorrows, than heat his affections in the expectation of joyes and pleaſures in this world.

Fourthly, I anſwer, Though the people of God have not alwayes dayes of ſuch outward proſperity, nor years of ſuch ſenſitive pleaſures, yet they have that which is better, and if they have no pleaſures, they do not want them. The Apoſtle could ſay (*Phil.* 4. 11.) *I have learned in what ſtate ſoever I am, therewith to be content.* What is pleaſure if content be not? We may have outward pleaſures, yet no content, but he that hath content within, cannot miſs of pleaſure. A man may have riches, but no contentment, but he that hath contentment is very rich, (1 *Tim.* 6. 6.) *Godlineſs with contentment is great gaine*, and great gaine is proſperity: this great gaine, this heart-pleaſure, or ſoul-reſt, contentment, is the aſſured portion of thoſe who obey and ſerve the Lord, what-ever their outward portion be in this world. And he may be ſaid to ſpend his dayes in good, and his years in pleaſure, who hath theſe pure gaines of gracious contentment, reſting the ſoul in God in all conditions. *The life of man* (that is, the comfort of his life) doth not conſiſt in the abundance of that which he poſſeſſeth, (*Luke* 12. 15.) or in ſenſe-pleaſures; but in that ſweet compoſure and ſedateneſs of his ſoul, reſting by faith in the promiſes of God, or rather in the God of the promiſes, and ſo ſucking ſweetneſs from them.

Laſtly, As though a ſervant of God ſhould be exerciſed with ſorrows all the dayes of his life, yet he cannot be ſaid to ſpend his dayes in ſorrow, becauſe he meets with many refreſhing intervalls and ſhines of favour from the face of God in the midſt of thoſe clouds; ſo he may be ſaid to ſpend his dayes in pleaſure, becauſe at leaſt, when his dayes here are ſpent, he conſummates his dayes (which is one ſignification of the word) by an entrance into everlaſting pleaſures.

So much for the anſwer of theſe queſtions, concerning this promiſe, *They ſhall ſpend their dayes in proſperity, and their years in pleaſure.* From the promiſe it ſelf, Note;

Firſt, *Obedience to God is profitable to man.*

God hath no profit by our Obedience, but we have. God doth not

not call us to ſerve him in his work, as we call ſervants to do our work, to get his living by us, or better himſelf; no, the Lord calls us to ſerve him and obey him, for our own good. *They conſult their own good beſt, who do moſt good.* I may ſay theſe three things of thoſe who do good (and what is ſerving God, but doing of good? or what is doing good but ſerving God?) Firſt, they ſhall receive true good; Secondly, they ſhall for ever hold the beſt good, the chief good, they ſhall not only ſpend their dayes and years in good, but when their dayes and years are ſpent, they ſhall have good, and a greater good than any they had, in ſpending the dayes and years of this life; they ſhall have good in death, they ſhall come to a fuller enjoyment of God, *the chief Good*, when they have left and let fall the poſſeſſion of all earthly goods. Thirdly, they that do good ſhall find all things working together for their good; if they have a loſs, they ſhall receive good by it; if they bear a Croſs, that ſhall bear good. Outward troubles cannot diſturb, much leſs pollute our ſpiritual good; for, *All things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpoſe* (Rom. 8. 28.) Surely then the ſervice of God is a gainful ſervice, a profitable ſervice; though the work may be hard, and the way painful, yet the wages will be ſweet, and the end pleaſant. The contemplation of this put *David* upon putting that queſtion (*Pſal.* 34. 12, 13.) *What man is he that deſireth life, and loveth many dayes, that he may ſee good* (that is, *that he may enjoy good*) *keep thy tongue from evil, and thy mouth, that it ſpeak no guile; depart from evil, and do good.* The Pſalmiſt makes Proclamation, What man is he that would have good? let him do good, let him obey and ſerve God, and he ſhall have good.

Again, Conſider the Promiſe in relation to the Perſons deſcribed, *verſ.* 8, 9, 10. *They were bound in Fetters, and holden in Cords of affliction:* Now ſaith *Elihu* here, *they ſhall ſpend their dayes in proſperity, and their years in pleaſures.*

Hence Note;

There is no condition ſo low and forlorn, but the Lord is able to bring us out of it, and into the enjoyments of fulleſt comforts;

He can change our Iron Fetters, and Cords, into Rings of Gold,

Gold, and Bracelets; he can tranſlate our dayes of trouble, and our years of pain, into dayes of proſperity, and years of pleaſure; it was ſo with *Job* in the iſſue, and he was the man that *Elihu* here intended. *Job* was long bound in fetters, and holden in the cords of affliction, yet as *Elihu* told him he ſhould, ſo he did afterwards, ſpend his dayes in proſperity, and his years in pleaſure; the Lord doubled his Cattel to him, his friends fil'd his Coffers, and his Cabinets, *Every man gave him a peece of money, and every one an Ear-ring of Gold*; his children alſo were the ſame for number, his daughters the faireſt in the Land; himſelf alſo lived in the fulneſs of this outward Proſperity, till he was full of dayes, and he fed upon the delicious fruits of this Promiſe all his after-dayes. *Manaſſeh* having run a courſe of unparallel'd wickedneſs, was at laſt *taken by the Captains of the hoſt of the King of Aſſyria, among the Thorns, and they bound him with fetters, and carryed him to Babylon* (2 Chron. 33. 11.) yet when in his affliction he beſought the Lord his God, and humbled himſelf greatly before the God of his Fathers, he was entreated of him, and brought again to *Jeruſalem*, where he ſpent his dayes in proſperity, and his years in pleaſure. If we turn to the Lord in affliction, the Lord is ready to turn away our affliction, or (as the Church prayed in the half turn of her affliction, *Pſal.* 126. 4.) *to turn our captivity, as the ſtreams in the South*; that is, to make both a moſt admirable and a moſt comfortable turn of our condition. Streams in the hot Southern Countries are rare; the Rain of thoſe Lands uſually is duſt. Streams in the South are alſo very welcome: How glad are they of a cooling Showre from a Cloud, who daily feel, and are fainted with the ſcorching Beams of the Sun! Such a turn ſhall they have (ſaith *Elihu*) who being holden in the cords of affliction, turn from iniquity, obey and ſerve the Lord.

Thirdly, From the matter of the Promiſe,

Note;

A comfortable paſſage through this life, is a very great mercy, as well as the hope of happineſs for ever in the other life.

'Tis proſperity and pleaſure in this world, though not meer worldly proſperity and pleaſure, which is here promiſed; and we are not to ſlight any thing that comes by promiſe, yea, we ſhould highly eſteem thoſe things, which, conſidered in themſelves,

ſelves, are little worth, as they come to us through the Promiſe. We may quickly over-rate and over-reckon outward things in themſelves; and we ever do ſo, if we rate or reckon them any better than vanity; but as they are promiſed and beſtowed in a way of favour from God, and as they are a part of the purchaſe of Chriſt, and handed to us by him (ſo are even outward things to believers) thus they are very valuable. Upon theſe terms to live and ſpend our dayes in good, and our years in honeſt lawful pleaſures, is a great mercy.

From the whole take two Corolaries.

Firſt, *How blaſphemous then is their Opinion, who ſay it is a vain thing to ſerve the Lord, or that there is no profit in calling upon him*! which blaſphemy was refuted *Chap.* 21. 14.

Secondly, Would we have a good end of, or out-gate from our afflictions, then let us hear and obey. Thus much of the firſt caſe, what the iſſue of their afflictions ſhall be, who obey: The Second iſſue upon the contrary caſe, followeth in the 12th verſe.

Verſ. 12. *But if they obey not, they ſhall periſh by the Sword, and dye without knowledge.*

Here contraries are ſet one over againſt another, for their fuller illuſtration. *If they obey not*; that is, if thoſe righteous men ſpoken of before (*verſ.* 7.) *obey not*. What it is not to obey, is clear by what I ſaid was to obey, in opening the former verſe. I ſhall only take notice, that in this latter part it is not ſaid, *If they obey not, and ſerve him not*, but only, *if they obey not*; and I conceive, *Elihu* ſaith no more, or proceeds no further, becauſe they who deny obedience, will certainly deny ſervice; therefore he ſtops at that.

If they obey not.

They who are good in their ſtate, may often fail in doing that which is good; for of thoſe this Text yet ſpeaks, and is generally interpreted. The Hypocrite in heart is ſpoken of in the next verſe, but here *Elihu* is ſpeaking of the righteous, and becauſe he is ſo, therefore by this diſobedience cannot be meant an obſtinate rebellion, but a ſloth or careleſneſs in attending to the Call of God, for the amendment of ſome evil in their lives. *If they obey not*:

Hence

Hence Note;

The calls and commands of God are not alwayes obeyed, no not by good men, not by the righteous.

The call and command of God is not at all obeyed by the wicked, and it is not alwayes obeyed by the righteous. The righteous ſometimes hear the word, but do not anſwer it, and ſometimes they feel the rod, and do not attend it; they cry out of the ſmart of the rod, and of the ſores which the lathes of the rod have made upon them, they weep over, or becauſe of their ſores, yet they do not preſently give glory to God by obeying him, and leaving their ſins, I mean as to that ſpecial point of duty in which God would have them obey him, and as to thoſe ſpecial ſins which God by that affliction calls upon them to leave. Many good men do not preſently underſtand the purpoſe of God in this or that affliction; and while it is ſo with them, they muſt needs fail in anſwerableneſs to it. I know every godly man hath a general bent to obey God and ſerve him. It is not with the godly in their afflictions as with the wicked under theirs, of whom the Prophet ſpeaks, (*Iſa.* 9. 13.) *They did not turn to him that ſmote them*; yet even ſuch Scriptures are in a degree applicable to many of the people of God, *they do not alwayes turn to him that ſmiteth them*; when they are exerciſed with variety of calamities, they mind not the Lord as they ought. And hence it is (I ſay) that though the righteous have a general bent to obedience, yet they ſometimes come ſhort of that obedience which a ſpecial affliction or correction calleth them to; yea, they may be ſo ſhort in anſwering it, that the Lord may proceed to lay heavier and greater afflictions upon them, even to the taking of them out of the world, as it followeth in this verſe, *If they obey not*

They ſhall periſh by the ſword.

Before they were bound in fetters and held in cords, but now the ſword ſhall overtake them, and they ſhall *periſh or be taken away by the ſword*: The Hebrew is, *they ſhall paſs away by the ſword*, that is, they ſhall die. Man is ſaid to paſs away by the ſword, when the ſword doth not paſs by him, but ſmites and kills him, which is a temporal periſhing. It is ſaid (*Iſa.* 57. 1.)

De carcere educuntur ad occiſionem gladij Aquin. *Per gladium tranſire dicitur quicquid gladio occidi-tur*, Druſ.

The righteous periſh, &c. As the righteous periſh by a natural death, ſo they may periſh by a violent death, and poſſibly that may fall upon them when they attend not the providential diſpenſations of God.

בשלח *Proprie est miſſile, aut jaculum.*

They ſhall periſh by the ſword, or by the drawn weapon. The word notes any weapon that is drawn or caſt forth, hence ſome tranſlate it a Dart or Javeling, which is ſhot out of the hand; but it may alſo be applied to the Sword, which being drawn forth out of the ſheath is often ſent upon deadly meſſages, and may be numbered among miſſive weapons: Now when *Elihu* ſaith, *they ſhall periſh by the ſword*, we may take the word *ſword* properly or tropically. Properly two wayes; Firſt, for the ſword of the Warrier; Secondly, for the ſword of the Magiſtrate, either juſtly puniſhing or grievouſly afflicting. Some good men have acknowledged in great trials and ſufferings, under the hand of man, that God hath met with them for their neglect or non-attendance to more immediate afflictions under his own hand. Again, take the ſword tropically or improperly, and ſo any ſore affliction that greatly annoyeth, eſpecially if to death, is called *a ſword* in Scripture; *They ſhall periſh by the ſword* (under one notion or other) *if they do not obey.*

Hence learn;

God will not ſpare, no not his own People, if they do not obey him.

God is full of ſparing-mercy, but the righteous may provoke him ſo, that he will not ſpare, no not them. Judgement begins often at the houſe of God (1 *Pet.* 4. 17.) *And if Judgement begin at the houſe of God, what ſhall the end be of thoſe that obey not the Goſpel?* This is a terrible word. The righteous may periſh by the ſword; how dreadfully then ſhall the unrighteous, the wicked, the ſcorners of godlineſs, periſh! If God will make his own people ſmart in his anger, when they provoke him, how will he *ſpeak to his enemies in his wrath, and vex them in his ſore diſpleaſure* (Pſal. 2. 5.)

Secondly, From the gradation of their troubles; Firſt, they were *bound in fetters and holden in cords*, but now here's a ſword, a devouring ſword, a killing deadly weapon.

Hence

Hence learn;

They who give not glory to God in leſſer or in lighter afflictions draw greater upon themſelves;

They may come from a cord to a ſword, from being bound to be ſlain. God hath ſeveral ſorts of Inſtrumenrs to chaſten his people with, and as the beſt of outward good things may be the portion of evil wicked men, ſo the worſt of outward evils may be the portion of good men; they may at any time, and ſometimes *ſhall periſh by the ſword*, and as it followes,

They ſhall die without knowledge. בבלי ועת

The ſword is death, a deadly ſword; *they ſhall die*

Without knowledge, or, as the text may be read, *becauſe they were without knowledge.*

But is any righteous man without knowledge? *That the ſoul be without knowledge is not good*, (ſaith *Solomon*, *Prov.* 19. 2.) How then can he be good whoſe ſoul is without knowledge? And ſeeing we interpret this text of the righteous, how can it be ſaid, *they die without knowledge?*

I anſwer, Knowledge may be taken in a more general ſenſe, and ſo no righteous man either lives or dies without knowledge? he neither lives nor dies without the knowledge of God in Jeſus Chriſt, *whom to know is eternal life*, (*John* 17. 3.) and without the knowledge of whom, all (who are actually capable of ſuch knowledge) muſt die eternally; he neither lives nor dies without the knowledge of himſelf as a ſinner, and of Chriſt who ſaveth him from his ſins. Such ignorances are inconſiſtent with the ſtate of a godly man; he may do fooliſhly, but he is not a fool; he may be wanting in ſome kind of knowledge, but he doth not want knowledge; he cannot be without ſaving knowledge, though he may periſh (temporally) *without knowledge.* The firſt thing that God makes in the new creation is light, the light of knowledge, there he begins his work; therefore we cannot take knowledge generally, ſimply and abſolutely, in this text; but as knowledge may be taken reſtrictively, for knowledge in or about this or that particular, ſo a good man may want knowledge, there may be ſomewhat which the Lord would acquaint the righteous with, and teach them

Dei monita per caſtigationes ſcire & intelligere noluerunt; Druſ.

them by their fetters and afflictions, which they do not learn; and therefore *they die without knowledge*, or, becauſe they are without knowledge; yet that want of knowledge, together with all their other wants and ignorances, are pardoned to them.

Non eſt oratio affirmativa ſtultitiæ vel negativa ſcientiæ, ſed ſimpliciter negat advertentiam. Bold.

Further we may expound the words thus; *They ſhall die without knowledge*, that is, without the knowledge or conſideration of of that ſpecial affliction or judgement which is coming upon them, they ſhall die unawares, not thinking, nor ſo much as dreaming of ſuch a judgement, or that ſuch a hand of God was ſo near them. According to this interpretation, *Elihu* intends either their inadvertency of that approaching ſcourge or calamity with which they are overtaken, or their not underſtanding the reaſon of it. Chriſt ſaith in the Goſpel (*Luke* 12. 46.) *The maſter of that ſervant* (*the evil ſervant*) *ſhall come in a day which he knowes not of, and in a time when he looked not for him.* Now, as the laſt Judgement, the great Judgement ſhall come upon the wicked in a time when they look not for it, ſo the Lord may bring a ſpecial particular judgement upon ſome one or more of his own people, when they do not think of it, or never ſuſpected that they ſhould fall under it. Good men are ſometimes ſurprized; and ſo, *they ſhall die without knowledge*, is no more than this, they ſhall be taken unawares by a ſuddain unexpected judgement. Though every godly man hath a preparation for the general judgement, yet as to a particular one, he may be much unprepared.

Laſtly, Some expound the words of more than inadvertency, or bare neſcience, even of folly, and ſome degree of affected ignorance, which poſſibly may prevaile upon a righteous man in ſome caſes and for a time; but I rather adhere to the former interpretation, becauſe (as was ſhewed before) the whole context ſeems to intend a more ordinary caſe of a righteous man. So then, this Scripture holds out the ſad iſſues which the neglect of giving God the glory of his corrections and chaſtenings may bring upon the righteous.

Hence note;

Diſobedience, or neglect of duty, is dangerous, whereſoever it is found.

The Church of *Corinth* felt this; many of them died (in the ſence

ſence given) without knowledge, or not having a due ſpiritual knowledge of Chriſt in the holy ſupper, which the Apoſtle calls, their *not diſcerning the Lords body*, (1 *Cor.* 11. 29.) and preſently tells them (*ver.* 30.) *for this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep*; that is, are taken away by death. *Any kind or degree of ſin is dangerous*; not to obey a hint of providence, not to obey an intimation of the mind of God in an affliction, may be very dangerous; afflictions may end in deſtructions, and fetters in death, if the purpoſe of God in them be not attended and anſwered by us.

Secondly note;

Not to obey when God calls and commands, is folly and ignorance.

Such do as if they had no knowledge at all what or how to do.

Laſtly in that he ſaith, *they ſhall dye without knowledge*, we may learn this from it;

The ignorance and heedleſneſs of men undo them, and bring deſtruction upon them.

Many die becauſe they have no knowledge, others not heeding or minding what they know. Holy *David* confeſſed that in one point he was *ignorant and fooliſh, even as a beaſt*, (*Pſal.* 73. 22.) and when good men act like beaſts, without a due improvement of reaſon and underſtanding, they may periſh (as to this temporal life) like beaſts, (*Iſa.* 5. 13.) *Therefore my people are gone into captivity, becauſe they have no knowledge.* The Prophet (I conceive) is to be underſtood (as this text) not that they had no knowledge at all, or were utterly ignorant, but they had no knowledge as to that ſpecial diſpenſation of God, how to make uſe of it or improve it, at leaſt they took no heed, no care to uſe or improve it; and (ſaith he) *they therefore are gone into captivity*, they are brought under bondage to their enemies, they are ſcattered, ruin'd, and (as to this world) quite loſt and undone. Wicked men are undone by acting againſt their knowledge; good men may be undone by acting below their knowledge, or by not acting according to what they know or ſhould have known; and ſo (through their ignorance or heedleſneſs) *they dye without knowledge.*

JOB, Chap. 36. Verſ. 13, 14.

13. *But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath, they cry not when he bindeth them.*

14. *They die in youth, and their life is among the unclean.*

Elihu having put the caſe of the righteous in theſe two conditional propoſitions laſt opened, as ſomewhat doubtful, what at leaſt ſome of them may do, as to a right improvement of outward afflictions; he proceeds in theſe two verſes to ſhew the caſe of the wicked wholly deſperate, in their affliction. There is an *if* put upon the righteous, but he is concluſive upon the hypocrite; to be ſure he will neither hear nor obey, neither ſubmit nor conform to the voyce of the rod.

So that in theſe words he ſets forth the common yea conſtant iſſue of the hand of God upon *hypocrites in heart*. Poſſibly good men, righteous men may not alwayes anſwer the expectation of God, when affliction is upon them; but as for *hypocrites*, *they* (alwayes) *heap up wrath*. And in this we may conceive *Elihu* hath a reſpect to *Job*; For though he did not conclude him to be an *hypocrite in heart*, yet he put it home upon him to conſider the matter, whether he himſelf had not, at leaſt, acted and carried it like an *hypocrite in heart*, under the afflicting hand of God, foraſmuch as he was no more humbled and ſubdued under it. And indeed *Elihu* turns every ſtone, and tryeth every way, to bring down the ſpirit of *Job*. And therefore as he had ſhewed, what the uſuall effects of the hand of God upon the righteous are, ſo he tells him how it is with the wicked in that caſe, thereby to put him upon the triall, whether he had not reaſon to ſuſpect himſelf to be an hypocrite, becauſe his carriage, was ſo like theirs.

חנפי לב

Verſ. 13. *But the hypocrites in heart*, &c.

That adverſative particle ſhews that he is dealing upon another ſubject: *hypocrites in heart* are far from righteouſneſs. I have diſcourſed ſomewhat largely concerning the hypocrite in chap. 34 v. 30. upon theſe words, *That the hypocrite reign not, leſt the people be*

ſnared; Therefore I intend not here to revive that ſubject, but ſhall only a little open the additional tearm or amplification which is here put upon the hypocrite. *Elihu* doth not ſay barely, *hypocrites heap up wrath*, but, *The hypocrites in heart heap up wrath*; as implying ſome ſpecial character and brand of hypocriſie upon the perſons here aimed at. *An hypocrite in heart* is no more but this, nor is it any thing leſs than *an hearty hypocrite*; he is one that is not to the halves, but wholly hypocritical; he that is but half with God (ſuch is the hypocrite) is wholly profane, wholly wicked. The ſame word which ſignifyeth an hypocrite ſignifyeth a profane perſon, and ſo we put it in the margine of this text, *The hypocrite*, or *the profane in heart*. This expreſſion is very paralel with that of the Apoſtle *Paul* (*Col.* 1. 21.) *Ye that were ſometimes alienated and enemies in your mind, by wicked workes, yet now hath he reconciled*. He doth not only call natural men *enemies* to God, as indeed they all are, (*the wiſdome of the fleſh is enmity againſt God*) But he calls them *enemies in their minds*, that is, ſuch as have a mind to be enemies, or ſuch as have a good will to do evil. So here, *an hypocrite in heart* is a man heartily hypocritical; whoſoever is an hypocrite is an hypocrite in heart; Hypocriſie is that which lyeth at the bottome, it is an heart-ſin: though hypocriſie act and vent it ſelf at the tongue, and by the hand, yet all hypocriſie lyeth at the heart; nevertheleſs, every hypocrite is not (ſtrictly taken) an *hypocrite in heart*. The hypocrite in heart is oppoſed to the upright in heart, (*Pſal.* 92. 11.) The hypocrite in heart hath a heart as full of hypocriſie, as the upright in heart would have hearts full of uprightneſs. Yet further to characterize the hypocrite in heart,

Take theſe three conſiderations to clear it;

Data operis ingenium eſt.

First, an hypocrite in heart is one who doth evil, not out of miſtake, but out of deſigne; not becauſe he cannot do otherwiſe, but becauſe he will not, and is reſolved on it; ſuch a ſinful piece or ſuch a piece of ſinfulneſs is the *hypocrite in heart*; he ſins as he ſhould love and ſerve and obey God, with all his heart.

Secondly, as this hypocrite doth evil upon deſign, ſo alſo he doth good with a wicked mind. It is poſſible for a man to do good unſincerely, or not to be ſincere in the doing of it, and yet not to do it with a wicked mind and purpoſe, or with a baſe deſign. There are many who do good, who come to duty, whether in

family or congregation, who mind not what they do, nor have any love to it, or zeal for it; here is hypocritical attendance, in that they ſet not themſelves to meet with God or find God in the duty; yet poſſibly ſuch come not with a wicked purpoſe, nor with a plot in their heads in doing theſe duties, that's proper to the hypocrite in heart. Thus we may underſtand that of *Solomon*, lately opened upon another occaſion, (*Prov.* 21. 27.) *The ſacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind!* A man may be wicked as to his ſtate, yet not do a thing with a wicked mind, not bring a ſacrifice (which includeth all holy ſervices) with an unholy purpoſe: but the hypocrite in heart when-ever he doth any good, hath a plot in it; as he alwayes ſerves God with a reſerve, he hath ſomewhat that he doth with-hold, he cometh by halves, ſo he alwayes ſerves God with a deſign. He may make a fair ſhew, and a great noiſe in profeſſion, but ever he hath ſome end of his own in it. *Jehu* ſaid, *Come ſee my zeal for God.* He was about a good work, the deſtroying of *Ahabs* Houſe, and *Baals* Prieſts, this he called zeal for the Lord; but he did all this with a wicked mind; for the great thing upon his heart was to get into the Throne, to be a King, he made uſe of all thoſe ſpecious acts of zeal only as a ſtirrup to raiſe himſelf into the ſaddle, the matter he aimed at was to eſtabliſh the kingdom of *Iſrael* to himſelf and his poſterity. That's a ſecond thing; as the hypocrite doth evil purpoſely, ſo when he doth good he hath a purpoſe, a plot in it, more than is good; he doth it not, either for the honour of God, or for the enjoyment of God, which are the beſt ends of every good action, and without a pure eye, without which no action, how good ſoever in it ſelf, is good to, or turnes to the good of the actor.

Thirdly, The *hypocrite in heart*, I conceive, is ſuch a one as knows himſelf to be an hypocrite. There are many hypocrites, who little thinke that they are hypocrites, yea, they may think themſelves very upright and honeſt in what they do; ignorant deluded ſouls, underſtand not their own caſe. *Laodicea* was wretched and miſerable, theſe are falſe and hypocriticall, but know it not. As ſome judge, or rather miſ-judge themſelves hypocrites, who are upright in the maine with God, and honeſt at heart, (How frequent are ſuch complaints, and ſelf-wronging accuſations?

ons?) So many are hypocrites, or rotten at heart, who know it not. *The heart is deceitfull above all things*, (ſaith the Prophet *Jer.* 17. 9.) *and deſperately wicked, who can know it?* And among all men, common hypocrites know leaſt of their own hearts. But the hypocrites in heart know their hearts are rotten and falſe, to what they profeſſe. The politick hypocrite knoweth that all he doth is but in ſhew, and that he doth but act a part in Religion, as a Player upon the Stage, when he is moſt religious; he doth but take a colour, or die, or paynt himſelf with Religion, (which is the ſignification of the word here uſed in the Hebrew) but is not religious, he doth but put a faire gloſſe, or diſguiſe upon himſelf, that he may appear what he is not, or what he knows himſelf not to be; He knoweth in himſelf that he is naught, while he would be known by and to others as good. The Apoſtle ſpeaking of the grievous ſufferings of ſome primitive Chriſtians, ſaith (*Heb.* 10. 34.) *They took joyfully the ſpoyling of their goods, knowing in themſelves that they have a better and a more enduring ſubſtance*; that is, they knew they were in a pretent gracious ſtate, and that there remained for them an eternal happy ſtate. Thus alſo an hypocrite in heart, is one that *knoweth in himſelf*, or in his heart, that he doth but pretend to be good, and that whatſoever good he doth, it is only in pretence, and is therefore (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the Heretick, *Tit.* 3. 11.) *condemned of himſelf*, while he acquits or commends himſelf never ſo well to others. Thus it appears how bad, how baſe the hypocrite in heart is in his beſt appearances, and how much he excels and bears away the Bel for baſeneſs and badneſs, I may ſay, for madneſs too, from all common hypocrites. Now as they exceed in ſin, ſo they ſhall in miſery, the next words aſſure us of that; *But the hypocrites in heart*

heap up wrath.

Induunt ſpecium pietatis et colorem ſanctitatis; hæc enim eſt propietas radicis חנף, *ſcilicet inficere rem alieno colore, vel obumbrare et velare alieno pallio.*

Elihu having deſcribed the perſons that he dealeth with, or labour, he alſo ſets forth both their woſull and ſinfull condition: And he doth it three wayes:

Firſt, By what they do; *They heap up wrath.* For a man to be labouring continually only to make heaps of wrath for himſelf, in what a woſull condition is that man!

Secondly, He ſhews their bad, both ſinfull and woſull condition, by what they will not do; that we have at the latter end of

the 13th verſe, *They cry not when he bindeth them.* They heap up wrath, that they do: *They cry not when he bindeth them*; That they do not.

Thirdly, He ſets forth their wofull condition by that which is an inevitable conſequent and fruit of ſuch doing, and not doing, the evil which they ſuffer; that we have (*v.* 14) *They die in youth, and their life is among the unclean.* Theſe are the parts of the wofull condition of hypocrites in heart. I ſhall give a touch upon each of them.

ישימו אף *Ponunt iram.*

Firſt, Conſider what they are doing: If you would know their trade, 'tis this; *They are heaping up wrath*; they add wrath to wrath, till they make a mighty maſſe or heap of it. There is a difference among ſome interpreters what wrath is here intended. *They heap up wrath.*

Aliqui, ponunt iram, *intelligunt, exacerbeſcunt in deum.* Merc:

Firſt, Some conceive that *Elihu* meaneth their own wrath. Hypocrites in heart heap up wrath, that is, when God doth at any time bind them in fetters, and holdeth them in the cords of affliction, as he ſpake in the former context, theſe hypocrites in heart, what do they? Do they obey? Do they turn from iniquity? Do they amend their hearts or lives? No; *They heap up wrath*, they grow angry, they vex and rage inſtead of repenting; that's all theſe hypocrites do; when the Lord hath bound them in fetters, and holds them in the cords of affliction, they are all in a flame, they are mad with rage and fury. Some both of the Ancients and Moderns, inſiſt upon this opinion, and it is a very great truth, that when the hypocrite in heart is under the hand of God, when God hath him faſt in his fetters, his wrath doth boyl, his fury comes up in his face, as it is ſaid (*Ezek.* 38. 18.) concerning the wrath of God towards his enemies: this fully anſwers that aſſertion of *Eliphaz*, (Job 5. 2.) *Wrath killeth the fooliſh man.* What wrath? his own wrath; he kills himſelf with vexing and fretting. The hypocrite in heart is a wrathfull man, when things go not right with him. Some have ſo expounded that (*Eph.* 2. 3.) *Ye were by nature children of wrath, even as others. Children of wrath*, that is, *wrathfull children*; we are full of wrath, full of anger by nature. Though I do not take that to be the ſenſe of the Apoſtle; but that by *children of wrath*, he means all men as borne under the wrath of God, nor do I conceive this the proper meaning here, though not unuſefull. *They heap up wrath*, that is, they grow angry, vexed, and troubled; But Secondly

Secondly, Rather the wrath heaped up, is the wrath of God, which is the moſt dreadfull thing in the world; and ſo theſe words may be expounded by thoſe of the Apoſtle to an impenitent ſinner (*Rom.* 2. 4, 5.) *Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance: But after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart treaſureſt up unto thy ſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. To heap up wrath*, and, *to treaſure up wrath*, are the ſame. The abuſers of the patience and long-ſuffering of God, are treaſuring up wrath againſt themſelves from day to day; and ſo do the hypocrites in heart, *They heap up wrath.*

Hence Note, Firſt,

The wicked or hypocrites in heart, grow more wicked while the hand of God, his afflicting hand, is upon them.

The more they are under the rod, the more they rebell. I ground it upon this; If they did not heap up ſin, they ſhould not heap up wrath; were they not more vile & wicked under their affliction, there would not be more anger againſt them. It was ſaid of thoſe that would have brought in the captives (which was a very oppreſſing purpoſe, (2 *Chro.* 28. 13.) ye ſhall not; for *Whereas we have offended againſt the Lord already, ye intend to add more to our ſins & to our treſpaſſe.* Then preſently followeth, *For our treſpaſſe is great, and there is fierce wrath againſt Iſrael.* As if it had been ſaid, If ye do this thing ye will increaſe the wrath of God (which is very fierce already) and blow it up into a conſuming flame. While men grow more and more wicked and vile, God groweth (as to the manifeſtations of wrath) more wrathfull. When we hear of the increaſe of wrath, we may be ſure there hath been a proportionable increaſe of ſin. It is ſaid of *Ahaz*, who was a hypocrite in heart, a very prophane perſon, (2 *Chron.* 28. 22.) that *in the time of his diſtreſſe he treſpaſſed yet more againſt the Lord*, and treſpaſſing more againſt the Lord, he heaped up more of the Lords wrath againſt himſelf: For 'tis added, (*v.* 23.) *He ſacrificed to the gods of Damaſcus which ſmote him*; he got nothing but blows, for his paines, or impious piety in ſerving them: *And he ſaid, becauſe the gods of the Kings of Syria help them, therefore will I ſacrifice to them, that they may help me.* But what got he by this encreaſe

creaſe of his ſin? Surely nothing, but an encreaſe of wrath; for, it followeth in the ſame verſe, *They were the ruine of him and of all Iſrael.* God makes new rods, when men make new ſins; and he multiplyeth ſwords, while men multiply tranſgreſſions. The more men draw iniquity with cords of vanity, the more they draw miſery upon themſelves, and are held the faſter in the cords of affliction.

Secondly, When 'tis ſaid, *The hypocrites in heart heap up wrath.* We know hypocrites are cunning gameſters, they hope to ſin ſo cloſely and artificially, that no hurt ſhall ever come to them by it, yet *The hypocrites in heart heap up wrath.*

Hence Note;

The wiles and policies of hypocrites will availe them nothing;

They ſhall not avoyd wrath, do what they can; the Lord will find them out. The Apoſtle ſaith (*Gal.6.7.*) *God is not mocked; for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap; for he that ſoweth to his fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption; but he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting.* Let hypocrites *in heart* ſow as cunningly as they can, though they ſeem to ſow only good ſeed, yet they ſhall reap bad fruit, becauſe they ſowed with a bad heart. Hypocrites may deceive men, and heap up their favours to themſelves, but they cannot deceive God, who knows their hearts, and will therefore conſume them in his wrath, which they have heaped up to themſelves.

Thirdly, *Elihu* puts it upon hypocrites in heart to be at this work of heaping up wrath. All impenitent ſinners do it, but he puts it upon them eſpecially. All ſinners, open profeſſed ſinners, that ſin and hide it not, that throw up even the very name and profeſſion of Religion, theſe all heap up wrath; yet they heap up moſt, and are here ſpoken of, as the only heapers up of wrath, who are *hypocrites in heart.*

Hence Note;

God is extreamly angry with hypocrites, or the wrath of God doth burn extreamly hot againſt hypocrites;

He heats the Furnace of his wrath ſeven times hotter for *hypocrites in heart*, than for ordinary ſinners. The Lord (*Iſa.*10.5.) ſpeaking of the *Aſſyrian* ſaith, *The ſtaff in their hand is mine indignation,*

dignation: I will ſend him againſt an hypocriticall Nation, and againſt the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the ſpoyle, and to take the prey, and to tread them down, like the mire in the ſtreets. The Lord put a ſtaff in the hand of that great King of *Aſſyria*, and he called it *his indignation*; it was the *Lords indignation* which was a ſtaff in the *Aſſyrians* hand. But againſt whom will he ſend it? That text anſwers *againſt an hypocriticall Nation*; Who are they? *the people of his wrath.* God hath wrath for all ſinners, but the generation of hypocrites are the people of his wrath beyond all other people. None abuſe God like hypocrites: For, firſt, hypocrites carry it towards God, as if he were like the Idols of the Heathen, that have eyes, and ſee not ears, and hear not, hands, and handle not; feet, and cannot walk: That is, they carry it towards God as if he were but an Idol, ſatisfied with meer outward ſhews and ſervices. An Idol finds no fault, nor troubles any for their hypocriſie and falſe-heartedneſs: All that is required in the Idols ſervice, is but outſide and bodily exerciſe. Thus the hypocrites deal with God, as if he alſo would be ſatisfied and taken up with a little outſide ſervice; or as if ſacrifice would pleaſe him, when his word is diſobeyed, (*1 Sam.* 15. 23.) *Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and Sacrifices, as in obeying the voyce of the Lord?* Saul had been very careſull to bring home ſacrifices; He had not obeyed the command of God, yet hoped to put him off with a ſacrifice. But what were heards and flocks of cattel to be ſacrificed, when *Saul* rebelled againſt God? Nothing provokes God more than outward ſervices of worſhip, when they are not accompanied with inward, and univerſal ſubmiſſion to his will; for that's *no better* a ſacrifice, no purer worſhip, than a Heathen payes to his Idol-god. Hypocrites offer God only *the blind, and the lame,* (Mal. 1. 14.) that is, maymed and imperfect ſervices: there is imperfection in the ſervices of the beſt, but theirs are imperfect ſervices, ſo imperfect, blind and lame, that they are fit only for *the blind, and the lame*; ſo Idol-gods are called, (*2 Sam.* 5. 8.) And do not they heap the wrath of the true God, who ſerve him no better than falſe gods are ſerved, by their Idolatrous Devotioniſts!

Secondly, There muſt needs be a continual heaping up of wrath by Hypocrites; for, if not to ſet the heart right provokes God to wrath, (*Pſal.* 78. 8.) The Lord was exceedingly diſpleaſed

pleaſed with the *Iſraelites*, becauſe *they ſet not their heart aright*. Now if the Lord be ſo angry when the heart is not ſet aright) much more muſt it provoke the Lord, when men do purpoſely ſet their hearts wrong, when they do evil knowingly, adviſedly, when, as it were, they ſtudy to do evil. To do good only in ſhew, doth more diſpleaſe the Lord, than the doing of that which in ſhew is evil, or which is evil above-board, known to be ſo by all beholders. As Hypocrites often deceive men, ſo they attempt to deceive God himſelf. This cannot but heap up wrath, being it ſelf ſo great a heap of ſin. They who think God will be pleaſ'd with outward Services alone, or have no care to give him inward, are alike diſpleaſing to him. Therefore, among all ſorts of ſinners, the Lord declares his wrath, and thunders woe upon woe, in the Goſpel, againſt Hypocrites: They have heaped up wrath, and it ſhall be heaped upon them, *They ſhall have their Portion in the Lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone*. That's the firſt thing, what they do, *They heap up wrath*. When the hand of God is upon them, they are ſo far from coming forth humbly and penitentially to turn away his wrath, or to ſeek his face, that they provoke him more and more, and dreadfully enflame the reckoning againſt themſelves; *They heap up wrath*.

Secondly, *Elihu* tells us what the *Hypocrites in heart* do not; *They cry not when he bindeth them*. But is it a fault, or ſo great a fault, not to cry when God bindeth us? Are we commanded or bound to cry, when we are bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction? wherein lyeth this ſin? That will appear while I ſhew what crying is here intended.

יסר *Vincire pro caſtigare, ſpecies pro genere.*

Licet hanc doctrinam in communi Elihu *proponat, veriſimile tamen eſt* Jobum *dicendo pungere.*

To cry, is, Firſt, to complain and make a noyſe; this is the cry of impatience. Secondly, to mourn and be ſorrowful; this is the cry of Repentance. Thirdly, to pray, to ſupplicate, yea, to pray mightily, to pray ſtrongly; and this is the cry of Faith. (*Luke* 18. 7.) *Shall not God avenge his own Elect, which cry day and night unto him?* That is, which pray mightily to him night and day. The hypocrite in heart often makes the firſt cry when God bindeth him, the cry of impatience, but never the two latter; he makes not, either the cry of Repentance, or the cry of Faith in Prayer, when God bindeth him. This lets us ſee the ſecond Part of the wickedneſs of theſe hypocrites, 'tis the omiſſion of a moſt neceſſary duty, yea of two: They act very ſinfully, for *they*

they heap up wrath; they act not holily, for they do not cry when God binds them; that is, they neither repent nor pray, or they repent not heartily, they pray not earneſtly, in the day of their affliction.

Hence note, Firſt;

Hypocrites humble not themſelves, when God humbleth them;

When he binds them as it were hand and foot, they are tongue-tyed and heart-tyed. The Lord ſaid of ſuch (*Hoſ.* 7. 14.) *They cryed not unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds; they aſſemble themſelves for Corn and Wine, and rebel againſt me.* They howled and made a noyſe, but (ſaith the Lord) all the while they cryed not to me. There was no Repentance, no Prayer in their cry, they cryed not with their heart. Hypocrites will, firſt, complain much when God binds them; ſecondly, they murmure much when God binds them; thirdly, they will vex themſelves like a Bull in a Nett, when God binds them; Fourthly, they will rail and curſe when God binds them: but repent, or pray they do not. (*Iſa.* 8. 21.) *They ſhall paſs through it hardly beſted and hungry; and it ſhall come to paſs, that when they ſhall be hungry, they ſhall fret themſelves, and curſe their King and their God, and look upward.* Here was blaſpheming, but no crying, no repenting, no praying, no deprecating the hand of God, or the Judgment felt, in an humble and ſpiritual way. Hypocrites cry not to the Lord, though he makes them cry; they are readier to find fault with God, than with themſelves, in the day of adverſity: they neither cry the cry of godly ſorrow for their ſin, nor the cry of godly Prayers, for help out of their affliction. *They who are falſe with God in times of Peace, ſeldom, if at all, repent, or duly apply themſelves to God for help in times of trouble*; the reaſon is, The Conſcience of the *hypocrite in heart*, tells him, he hath dealt baſely with God; and therefore, when he is in ſtreights or bound, what face, what faith, what liberty of ſpirit, can he have to cry to God? Such hypocrites often cry out deſpairingly, but oh how rarely are they brought to cry, either believingly or repentingly, when God *bindeth them*.

Anteactæ turpis vitæ memoria animum enervat.

Secondly, Conſider this cry a little further, as a Prayer-cry. Hypocrites in heart may be much for prayer in time of proſperity, they were not hypocrites elſe; if they did not pray, they were

 openly

openly prophane, not hypocrites. Christ speaking of hypocrites, (*Matth.* 6.) tells us, they pray much, and (*Matth.* 7.) they *cry Lord, Lord.* Hypocrites are much in praying, especially in times of prosperity, yet here he saith, *They cry not when he bindeth them*, that is, in the day of adversity.

Hence Observe;

That which is not done uprightly, will not be done constantly.

Hypocrites cry to God only in shew at best, and when 'tis best with them; but when they fall into a troubled condition, they cry not, they even lay down their shew; they throw up their duties, when they miss their desires. They who have prayed often in a time of prosperity, not throwing away their sins, coming into affliction they throw away their prayers. Prayer will forsake them, who forsake God while they pray. Such as want Faith, will not have a heart to pray in their wants. If holy Duties cause us not to leave our sins, sinning will at last cause us to throw off our holy Duties. *Will*, or doth, *the hypocrite pray always?* was *Jobs* denying question, at the 27th Chapter of this Book. They who do not love prayer, cannot hold out in prayer: They who do not find a sweetness in drawing near to God in good Times, will soon withdraw from him in evil Times.

Thirdly, *They cry not when he binds them.*

Note;

Hypocrites, when they have most need of prayer, are least in the use of it.

When more need of Prayer, than in time of affliction? yet the hypocrite bound in affliction is bound in spirit from supplication.

Fourthly, They are said not to cry, though (in some sense, as hath been shewed) they do cry when God bindeth them.

Hence Note;

That holy Duty, which is not rightly and holily done, is reckoned by God as not done at all.

What almost is more common among hypocrites, yea, among some prophane ones, than to pray, and desire others to pray for them in time of affliction? *Pharaoh* will needs have *Moses* pray for him; and when *Ahab* was threatned with a binding he humbled himself; yet this goes for nothing, and gets nothing, at most, but what *Ahab* got a reprieve from some present or temporal punishment.

Fifthly, Those words are brought in as an aggravation of the sinfulness of the hypocrite; he doth not *cry when God binds him*, he prayeth not when God afflicts him.

Hence Note;

It is an heightning of our sin, to neglect prayer in time of affliction.

It is a sin to neglect prayer at any time, but their sin is exceeding sinful, who neglect it then, who cry not to God, when God binds them. Is it not extreamly evil, that they should not pray at all, or but little, when they should be all and alwayes in prayer? Affliction doth, as it were, naturally draw us, yea, forcibly drive us to God. *In their affliction they will seek me early* (Hos. 5.14.) As if the Lord had said, If ever they will seek me, surely they will seek me then, and then they will seek me *early*, that is, earnestly, and with all their hearts. Therefore how unnaturally sinfull are they, who in their affliction will not seek God! The Prophet saith (*Isa.* 26. 16.) *Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they powred out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them*: Yet the hypocrite will not pray when chastened. How sinful it is, not to pray when God binds us, appears upon many accounts.

First, To neglect prayer in time of affliction, is very sinful, because then we have most occasion for it.

Secondly, In time of affliction God especially calls us to prayer; he commands us at all times, but chiefly then. *Is any among you afflicted?* (is that any mans case?) *let him pray* (Jam. 5.14.) What should an afflicted man do else? What is he so much engag'd to do by his own necessity, what so much by the will of God, as to pray? Affliction, which takes us off from many other works, sets us upon and about this.

Thirdly, Prayer in time of affliction is under most promises to be heard: Now not to pray, not to cry to God, when we have so many promises to assure us of hearing, encreaseth our sin in the neglect of prayer. Though I do not say, the hypocrites prayer is under these promises of hearing, yet it shall be reckoned as a

ſin that he hath not prayed in affliction, becauſe there are ſo many promiſes of hearing prayer in affliction. The Lord is very gracious to thoſe that cry in affliction, and the hypocrite hath often heard that he will be ſo; how wretchedly ſinful is he then againſt God, as well as regardleſs of his own good, if God hear not of him, or from him, in his affliction! (*Pſal.* 102. 17.) *He will regard the prayer of the deſtitute, and not deſpiſe their prayer*, that is, graciouſly accept and anſwer it. Again (*Pſal.* 69. 33.) *The Lord heareth the poor, and deſpiſeth not his Priſoners*; that is, any who are bound in affliction: For I ſuppoſe that Text is not to be reſtrained to thoſe only, who are ſhut up in priſon, but takes in all thoſe that are bound in any trouble. In which ſenſe the word is uſed (*Lam.* 3. 34.) *The Lord doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, to cruſh under his feet all the Priſoners of the earth*: The Hebrew is, *All the bound of the earth*; by whom, he means, as chiefly the *Jewes* gone into Captivity, who were more properly bound, ſo any detained under any calamity whatſoever; to all, or any of them, that Scripture is applyable, *The Lord doth not willingly afflict*. Seeing then there are ſo many promiſes made to thoſe that cry in affliction, this will be urged upon the hypocrite as an heightning of his neglect, that he hath not cryed when God bound him. Thus we ſee the ſecond part of theſe hypocrites miſery, by what they do not, *They cry not when he bindeth them.*

The third thing by which the woful miſery of hypocrites *in heart* is ſet forth, is by what they ſuffer.

Verſ. 14. *They dye in youth, and their life is among the unclean.*

They dye in Youth.

The Hebrew is, *their Soul dyeth.* The Soul, ſtrictly taken, is immortal, and dyeth not; yet 'tis often ſaid in Scripture, *the Soul dyeth*; the Soul being taken, either, Firſt, for the Life; or, Secondly, for the Perſon. To ſay, *their Soul dyeth in youth*, is no more than to ſay (as we tranſlate) *they dye in youth.* The word rendred *Youth*, ſignifies in the Root of it, *to ſhake* and *trouble*, or to make ſome great concuſſion; hence ſome render the Text, *They dye in a Tempeſt, or in a Storm.* One of the *Jewiſh* Doctors gives it thus, *They ſhall dye with a ſtroak or ſhaking*; that is,

בנער

In tempeſtate: Vulg. *In excuſſione*: Rab.

is, they ſhall periſh by the force and violence of that affliction, which hath arreſted and taken hold of them.

Sal. *q. d. Excuſſione et vi afflictionum in quibus ſunt peribunt.*

But I conceive our reading is clear, *They dye in Youth*, becauſe Youth is the moſt ſtirring time of our life, or that time of life, wherein we uſe the moſt violent motions without, and are ſubject to the moſt violent paſſions within; therefore the Hebrew expreſſeth both by one word. Now when we ſay, *They dye in Youth*, the meaning is, they dye in the prime, in the beſt, in the moſt flouriſhing time of their life, in the ſpring of their dayes.

But is it true, that all hypocrites in heart dye in youth? Do not many, who diſcover themſelves to be but hypocrites, dye in old age?

I anſwer, Such-like Scriptures do not intend an univerſality, as to every individual; but only ſhew that 'tis ſo for the moſt part, or often ſo. Hypocrites in heart, men of prophane ſpirits, uſually dye in their youth, and are cut off in the Flower of their Age. They who multiply their ſins, ſubſtract from their dayes; and they have leaſt ground of hope to live long, who live ill. As bloody, ſo *deceitful men* (ſuch are hypocrites in heart) *ſhall not live out half their dayes.* They who live not out half their dayes, dye in youth. That alſo is the meaning of *Eliphaz* (*Chap.* 15. 32.) where he ſaith, The wicked man ſhall have his recompence *before his time*; as alſo when he ſaith (*Chap.* 22. 16.) *They were cut down out of time*; that is, before the ordinary time of cutting man down by Death was come. And therefore, I anſwer,

Secondly, *they die in youth*, needs not be taken in that ſtrictneſs, as importing that they die before they come to mens eſtate, but only that they die before the common time of dying. To die in youth ſignifieth any immature death; or when death cometh ſuddainly upon any, they may be ſaid to die in youth. Thus here; *they die in youth*, that is, ſome immature or ſuddain death overtakes them, they come to an haſty or untimely end, they prolong not their dayes on earth.

Thirdly, this dying in youth may refer to the hypocrites unpreparedneſs or unfitneſs to die. Unprepared perſons may be ſaid to die in youth, becauſe youths or younger men are uſually unprepared to die. Hence that ſerious *memento* or warning given them (*Eccleſ.* 12. 1.) *Remember now thy Creator in the dayes*

of

of thy youth. Young men are commonly so unprepared to die, that whosoever die unprepared, may be said to die in youth; yea, though they die in old age, *they die infants.* I may say at least in allusion to that of the Prophet (possibly it may be a proof of what I say) *Isa.* 65. 20.) *An old man that hath not filled his dayes* (by being good and doing good) *dieth a child.* As a *child may be said to die an hundred years old,* when he dies full of grace, so a man of an hundred years old, may be said to die a child, an infant, when he hath no grace; for though he hath been long in the world, yet he can hardly be said to have lived at all. So then, how long soever the hypocrite in heart hath had a being on the earth, and a breathing in the air, he alwayes dieth in youth, or before his time, because he hath not yet learned the way to eternal life.

Moritur cum Juventa. Jun.

Ponitur ב *pro* בין *ut* cap. 9. 26. Psal. 143. 7. Pisc. *Neque morientur & pari judicio Dei conterentur atque juveniles illi animi qui proterve obnituntur Deo, & palam ad omne flagitium projecti sunt.* Jun.

There is yet another reading of the words; we say, *they die in youth,* that saith, *they die with youth,* or *young men*; that is, as dissolute, deboyst, vitious and riotous young men die, so hypocrites die. The hypocrite is opposed to the outwardly profane in his life, but he shall be like him in his death: As if *Elihu* had said, look as vain voluptuous youths, carnal youths, or young men, who give themselves up to their pleasures, look as or how they die, look what wrath is upon them when they die, even so shall *the hypocrites in heart die, they die with the youth.* I shall touch this further upon the last clause, where *Elihu* gives us this sence in other words, and in words that more fully reach this sence; for having said, *they die in* (*or with*) *youth,* he thus concludes,

And their life is among the unclean.

Ut hic vita mori dicitur, sic Authores Latini dicunt vita vivere & vitam vivere; vita moritur, cum homo vitam cum morte commutat. Drus.

Vita eorum (*supplee*) *aufertur.* Pisc.

Here it may be queried; forasmuch as he said before, they *die in youth,* how doth he here say, *Their life is among the unclean?* what life have they when dead? I answer, By *their life,* we may understand that life which *hypocrites in heart* shall have after death; which may be taken two wayes. First, for the life of the soul, while the body remaines a consuming or consumed carkass in the grave, that life (after death) the life of their soules is among the unclean. Secondly, for the life which they shall have after the resurrection of their bodies, that will be among the unclean too. Some translate the words thus, *Their life is taken away among the unclean*; we say, *their life is among the unclean*

clean. The word (*is*) is not in the original text, and we may make the supply by a word signifying *to take away*; Their life, is taken away among the unclean, that is, they shall die like the worst of sinners, they shall make no better an end, than the unclean and profane, no better than the most foul and filthy Sodomites, as the original imports. For

Cum meritoriis. Pisc. *Latini vocant cinædos & pathicos qui in concubitu libidinoso vice mulierum funguntur.* Id.

The word which we render *unclean,* hath a double, yea, a contrary signification, holy and unholy, clean and unclean. *They who are holy onely in name, are most unholy in heart and life.* The Scripture often by the same word expresseth things of utmost opposition; so here he calleth those who are most unholy, by a word which signifieth holiness; the Hebrew saith, *their life is among the Sodomites.* Mr. *Broughton* translates, *and their life with fornicators.* Sodomites, who are the most unclean and filthy sinners, worse than fornicators, are expressed by a word, by this word which also signifieth *holy,* or *holy ones* (*Deut.* 23. 17.) *There shall not be a Sodomite,* or, *an holy one among you*; and therefore as we read of Sodomites in the land, who are sinners against the the law of nature, (1 *Kings* 14. 24.) so according to that law of *Moses,* we read, 1 *Kings* 15. 12. and *Chapter* 22. 46. as also 2 *Kings* 23. 7. of the destroying of the houses of the Sodomites, and of the removing of Sodomites out of the land. Sodomites being the most abominable of all unclean ones, how unclean are they whose life is among them, or whose life is taken away with them! The Spirit of God doth rightly compare hypocrites to Sodomites and filthy persons, because it proceeds from the heat of some base lust or other that any are hypocrites. 'Tis proper to those who are magnanimous, or of noble spirits, to be open, clear-hearted and ingenious.

בקודשים *Duo contraria significat sanctum & profanum pollutum, fornicatorem. Reste simulatores effœminatis comparat, quia ex pravitate animi contingit, quod homines sint simulatores; est enim proprium magnanimi esse manifestum.* Aquin.

Their life is with the unclean.

Hypocrites have a great affectation to be numbered among the clean and holy, and possibly they have been, or may be, high in the opinion of men, for holiness, for very Saints; *But their life shall be among the Sodomites,* or the unclean. It being a shame to express the abomination of that sort of sinners by a word proper to them, the Scripture (by an Euphemisme) calls them *holy*; we translate the Scripture sense, and call them *unholy or unclean*; *Their life is among the unclean, among Sodomites.* Thus as the death

death of the hypocrite here is fully expreſſed in the former words, *He ſhall die with the youth*, that is, like thoſe ſinful Sodomitiſh youths, like thoſe youths who live in the heat of abominable luſts, though he ſeemed to have an heat of holineſs; ſo their life hereafter is fully expreſſed in theſe latter words, *Their life is with the unclean*. This clearly ſets forth hypocrites, they are ſpiritual adulterers, they pretend love to Chriſt as their husband, but their hearts go a whoring after the world. And therefore as their life was really in this world, though they pretended otherwiſe, ſo it ſhall be viſible in the world to come, *among the unclean*.

Hence Note;

Firſt, *They who are like the unclean in this life, ſhall be wrapped up with them in the next life after death, or in the ſecond death.*

They who live like the wicked ſhall dy like the wicked, and live with them, if theirs may be called a life, for evermore. The hypocrite, with all his varniſh and fair colours, ſhall not die like a godly man, nor live with him after death; though he hath lived the life of a godly man, as to appearance, yet he ſhal not die ſo, nor live ſo when the dead riſe: he ſhal die and live like and among his own company, the unclean. He was ſecretly unclean in his life, and he ſhall openly live among the unclean, when he dyes. *Balaam* a Sorcerer, a Witch, a falſe Propher, how did he beg, *that he might die the death of the righteous, and that his laſt end might be like his*! (*Num.* 23. 14.) The hypocrite would fain die like thoſe whom he hath imitated and made a ſhew of all the dayes of his life; But did *Balaam* dy like the righteous? no, he dyed, as he lived, like one that had loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs. Though hypocrites have lived in reputation with godly and good men, yea, have been reputed godly and good men, yet when they die they ſhal go down among the unclean, even among the debauched and filthy Sodomites, they ſhal go to their own place and to their own company; It is ſaid of *Judas* when he hanged himſelf (*Acts.* 1. 25) *He went to his own place*, his proper place. All things naturally tend to that which is congeniall or like to them; heavy things downward, light things upward. What place is congenial to, what place is the center of wicked men? Surely Hell, the bottomleſs pit is their own place, and that's the meaning of the text there. *Judas* was a great while among the Apoſtles in an high place, in a very excellent place

εἰς τὸν τόπον τὸν ἴδιον.

place, he went like an Apoſtle, or for an Apoſtle; but that was not his *owne place*; he was an hypocrite, and when he dyed then he went to his owne place, to that place which was proper to him. In this life good and bad are mingled together in the ſame place; the hypocrites and the ſincere may be in one Houſe, in one Congregation, in one Church, in the pureſt Church on earth there may be hypocrites in heart as well as ſincere; but when hypocrites die they ſhall be divided from all thoſe with whom they were never truly, or in heart, united. If it were poſſible, all the godly or ſincere ſhould be in one place as to ſpirituals here (that's moſt comely and deſirable, though not attainable) yet we cannot make the ſeparation perfect in this life; but at death it will be done perfectly; death will not leave one hypocrite among the ſincere, not a weed among the herbs, nor a chaff in the floor; death will make perfect ſeparation; after death all the holy ſhall be gathered together into one ſociety, and all the unholy into another ſociety by themſelves. It is ſaid of Abraham he *was gathered to his people* (*Gen.* 25. 8.) Not only to his kindred, in the fleſh, but to all thoſe that were of his faith. Death will gather all to their proper place and company. Godly *Joſiah* was gathered to his fathers (2 *Chron.* 34. 28.) and the wicked are ſaid (*Pſal.* 49. 19.) *to go to the generation of their fathers, where they ſhall never ſee light*. Death will ſend every one to his owne. The hypocrite ſhall no more ſhuffle himſelf among the righteous, nor Satan himſelf, nor any of his Sons, among the Sons of God; every man ſhall be for ever among his like.

Further note;

The ſmootheſt-faced and cloſeſt hypocrite in the world ſhall fare as bad or no better then the foulſt and deboyſteſt ſinner;

They ſhall die with the vile, and be taken away among the unclean. The faireſt hypocrite, ſhall have no more eſteem with God, then the foulſt Sodomite that ever was in the world. Chriſt ſaith, if any refuſe to receive the Goſpel, it ſhall be worſe with them then with *Sodom*, the cry of whoſe ſins went up to heaven; nor ſhall it be any whit better, but rather worſe, with them who receive the Goſpel of Chriſt only in ſhew, their hearts not being right with him. How woful is their preſent condition, who daily heap up wrath, who (in the ſenſe opened) die in or with youth, and whoſe life (after death) is among the unclean!

JOB, Chap. 36. Verſ. 15, 16, 17.

15. *He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ear in oppreſſion.*

16. *Even ſo would he have removed thee out of the ſtrait into a broad place, where there is no ſtraitneſs, and that which ſhould be ſet on thy table, ſhould be full of fatneſs.*

17. *But thou haſt fulfilled the judgement of the wicked: judgement and juſtice take hold on thee.*

ELihu having ſhewed how terrible God will be, how dreadfully he will deal with ſubtile hypocrites; *The hypocrites in heart heap up wrath*; proceeds in this context to do two things further.

Firſt, that he might raiſe ſome hope in *Job*, if he did at laſt humble himſelf, he repeats the gracious dealings of God with humble and upright-hearted ones at the 15th verſe; I ſay he repeats it, becauſe he had ſpoken of it before (*verſ.* 6, 7.) and this is a very uſeful and profitable repetition, by which *Job* is doubly admoniſhed to raiſe himſelf from his deſpair of a better condition; foraſmuch as God doth not afflict with a purpoſe to deſtroy, but that he may heal and help the afflicted. The greateſt deſign of God in chaſtening us ſhould be alwayes remembred, that he intends only our good, eſpecially to make us thereby better or more partakers of his holineſs.

Secondly, he makes application of the whole doctrine to *Job*; and that two wayes; Firſt, by way of conſolation, aſſuring him he had been delivered in caſe he had humbled himſelf duly & deeply before the Lord (*v.* 16.) *Even ſo would he have removed thee out of the ſtrait into a large place*, &c. Secondly, he applies it by way of conviction, that as yet ſurely he was unhumbled, becauſe ſtill under the afflicting hand of God, *verſ.* 17. *But thou haſt fulfilled the judgement of the wicked, judgement and juſtice take hold on thee.* So much concerning the ſtate of theſe three verſes in general; I ſhall now go on to open them in order.

Verſ.

Verſe 15. *He delivereth the poor in his affliction*, or *he pulls the poor out of affliction*;

הלץ *Traxit, extraxit, detraxit, in piet extraxit ex ærumna, miſeria, periculo.*

That is the ſenſe of the word, and the work of God. We find the word uſed to ſignifie the pulling or drawing off of the ſhoo, (*Deut.* 25. 19.) As the ſhoo is tied or buckled to the foot, and muſt be looſed before it can with any eaſe be drawn off; ſo afflictions are tyed to us, till the Lord unlooſeth and draweth them off from us, or us from them. To draw out of trouble, or to draw us out of trouble, is deliverance. *David* expreſſeth himſelf by that word (*Pſal.* 6. 4.) *Return, O Lord, deliver* (or draw) *my ſoul* (that is *me*) out of the enemies hand, or out of the trouble which compaſſeth me about, and is ready, like deep waters, to ſwallow me up. *He delivereth*

Chalatz *and* lachatz *two contraries, ſave and undoe, are ſweetly uſed by* Elihu *in this verſe.* Brough.

The poor in his affliction.

Who are meant by the poor, hath been ſhewed before, I ſhall not ſtay upon it here, only conſider, there are poor as to their outward ſtate, and poor as to their inward ſtate, that is, firſt, *poor in ſpirit*, which is a bleſſed poverty; and ſecondly, *poor in ſpirituals*, which is a miſerable poverty. The two former ſorts of poor eſpecially, when joyned in one, are here intended; *He delivereth the poor*

in his affliction, or, *in his poverty.*

עני בעניו *Eſt vox conjugata, pauperum a paupertate, miſerum a miſeria.* Pined.

There is a great elegancy in the Hebrew text; 'tis a word of the ſame root which ſignifieth the poor who are delivered, and the affliction in which or out of which he or they are delivered. We may tranſlate the text thus; *he delivereth the poor in his poverty*; that is, when he is in his poverty or affliction, the Lord delivereth him out of his poverty, or affliction; if poverty be his affliction, or whatſoever affliction comes under the name of poverty, the Lord delivereth him out of it. I have upon other paſſages of this book ſpoken of this deliverance, yet ſhall touch it here again, becauſe we ought always to remember it; we are often in affliction, often in trouble, and therefore we have need often to be put in mind, and continually to bear in mind, that God is a deliverer, the deliverer of his people from, or out of afflictions; *He delivereth the poor in his affliction.*

Hic ב *redditur per* בן *de, ex.*

Hence

Hence Note,

Deliverance is the work of God.

As the poor cannot deliver themſelves in affliction, ſo neither can the rich deliver the poor by his riches, nor the ſtrong by his power, nor the wiſe man by his wiſdom, craft or pollicy. The Lord often uſeth the help of man, creature help, in delivering the poor out of afflictions; yet the whole effect is here, and every where in Scripture attributed to God, *He delivereth the poor.* Deliverance of any ſort is of God, yet more eſpecially ſome ſort of deliverances are; as *Nebuchadnezzar* confeſſed (*Dan.* 3. 29.) who, when thoſe three Worthies were delivered out of the fiery furnace, *made a decree, that every People, Nation and Language which ſpake any thing amiſs, againſt the God of Shadrach, Meſhach and Abednego, ſhould be cut in pieces,* &c. and he did it upon this ground, *becauſe* (ſaith he) *there is no other God that can deliver after this ſort.* He had an opinion that his god could deliver, but he appropriated the glory of that deliverance to their God; there is no god can deliver *after this ſort*; no god but the God of *Shadrach*, *Meſhach* and *Abednego* can check and ſtop the rage of fire, and bring out thoſe unburnt, who are caſt into the burning. That's the firſt thing, *Deliverance is of the Lord.*

Secondly, *He delivereth the poor.*

Note;

The loweſt and meaneſt are the objects of deliverance.

When it's worſt with us, then uſually God cometh in. *He will be ſeen in the Mount*, and provide at a pinch; he loves to do for us when we can do nothing for our ſelve. Take the poor in any notion, but eſpecially for ſuch as being deſtitute of all help and means of deliverance, are alſo poor in ſpirit, not truſting to any help or humane arm, theſe, theſe are the perſons whom the Lord delights to deliver; and therefore God is ſo often ſpoken of in Scripture, as eſpouſing the cauſe and quarrel of the *Widow* and the *Fatherleſs.*

Thirdly, From the manner of expreſſion, *He delivereth the poor in affliction,*

Note;

Note;

They who are not delivered from affliction, may yet be delivered in affliction.

God doth not alwayes deliver his People from affliction (either not ſuffering affliction to fall upon them, or preſently bringing them out of affliction) *but he is engaged* (by promiſe) *to deliver them in affliction*; and this he doth ſometimes by checking the affliction, that it ſhall not hurt them; ſometimes by enabling them to bear, yea, to conquer the affliction, how much ſoever it hurts them. He delivered thoſe in the third of *Daniel*, in the fiery furnace, by checking the fire that it ſhould not hurt them; and *Daniel* in the Lions den, by checking the hungry Lyons that they did not devour him. He delivered *Job*, and *David*, and *Jeremie*, and the Apoſtles, and all the Martyrs, who loved not their lives to the death for the teſtimony of Jeſus, by cauſing them to glory in, and triumph over all their tribulations. *He delivereth the poor in his affliction,*

and openeth their ears in oppreſſion.

What's meant by *opening the ear*, was ſhewed at the 10th *verſe* of this *Chapter*, and at the 16th *verſe* of the thirty third; Yet conſider ſomewhat in the words anew.

And openeth their ear. The Hebrew copulative particle, which we render, *and*, is often in that language uſed to denote a ſeaſon, or ſpecial time, and then it is rendred by *when*; thus here he delivereth the poor in affliction, *when he hath opened their ears, by or in oppreſſion.* Thus alſo (*Pſal.* 139. 16.) *Thine eyes did ſee my ſubſtance, yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were faſhioned, when as yet there was none of them.* The Hebrew is, *and not one in them*; as if he had ſaid, God had a full Idea or platform of *Davids* body before it was framed; ſo here, *he delivereth the poor in affliction, and openeth, or when he hath opened their ears in oppreſſion*; that is, taught them effectually to make a good uſe of their afflictions. We may alſo render it, *after*; ſo the copulative (*Vau*) is expounded (*Lev.* 17. 15. *Jer.* 10. 13.) Thus here; *He delivereth the poor in affliction after he hath opened their ears*; that is, after he hath made them underſtand that ſin hath cauſed their ſufferings, and hath al-

Faciet eum intelligere quod pro peccatis punitur. Aquin.

ſo

so made them obedient and ready to receive counsel from him, as that phrase of *opening the ear* hath been opened. *He openeth*, or *when* or *after he hath opened their ears*

בלחץ a radice לחץ coarctavit, pressit, compressit, vim intulit præpositio, in sæpe valet, per.

in oppression, or by oppression,

The word notes, extream oppression; we read it (*Num.* 22. 25.) in the story of *Balaam*, where 'tis said, his Asse crushed (or pressed, or oppressed) his foot against the wall, while he was going to curse the people of *Israel*, that so *Balak* might oppresse them. This word is used also *Judg.* 4. 3. 1 *Sam.* 10. 18. and by it *Elisha* shewed how he would have *Jehorams* messenger handled (2 *Kings* 6. 32.) Oppression takes fast hold. The Lord takes fast hold of sinners by oppression, and will not let them go till he hath opened their ears; but as soon as he hath opened their ears in or by their oppressions, then (out of hand) he delivereth them in, if not out of their afflictions. From the connection of this with the former part of the *verse*,

Observe;

The evil of oppression or trouble is preparatory to, or a usual meanes to fit us for our receiving of good.

He delivereth them in affliction, when he hath opened their ears in or by oppression. When once the soul by hearing the cry of the oppressor is made obedient to the call of God, then God comes and workes deliverance. Good men, while free from evil, are oftentimes like the wilde ass described in the 39th chapter of this book, such as will not hear nor regard the crying of the driver, though he be not an exactor, (as the word there signifies and we put in the Margine) but a fair and gentle driver. Few hear when spoken to, till they feel as well as hear; and therefore the Lord first sends them into trouble, that they may hear, and having by that meanes opened their eares to hear, he brings them out of trouble. *When we are truly humbled by affliction, we are near deliverance from affliction.* The plaister must be kept on till the wound be healed. The Lord will not leave off scourging or correcting his people till he hath brought them to such a posture, that they are fit for mercy. The Lord helps and heals those who submit; and if they whom he hath bound with the cords of affliction, call humbly for release and relief, he will not forsake them, but

but restore them in due time to their former felicity; *He delivereth the poor in affliction, when he hath opened their eares in or by oppression.*

Elihu having laid down this general Doctrine, makes Application of it in the two verses following;

Vers. 16. *Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place.*

Thus *Elihu* proceeds from the general *Thesis* or assertion of Gods deliverance, to the *Hypothesis*, accommodating the Doctrine to *Jobs* Case and Person, *Even so he would have removed thee*, &c.

This 16th verse contains the first part of the Application made to *Job*, where *Elihu* informs him what the issue would undoubtedly have been, if he had submitted (which he did not) as he ought, to the afflicting hand of God, and had not (which he did and ought not) filled his mouth and the eare of God with bitter complaints, nor stood so stiffly upon his own defence and vindication. This *Elihu* doth by a double allusion.

First, to the bringing of a man out of close prison into a state of freedom, or into an open air. This he gives us in the former part of the verse, *even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place.*

Secondly, he doth it by alluding to the furnishing of a mans table with store, not only of wholsome but of delicious meates, who before fared very hardly. This he doth in the close of the verse, *and that which should be set on thy table, should be full of fatness.* As if he had said, *if thou had'st harkened to the voyce of God, thou should'st have had both liberty, and plenty, had'st thou been bettered by thy troubles, it had been better for thee, and much better with thee; thou hadst been enlarged fully, thou hadst been supplyed abundantly with all manner of good things desirable, even to the utmost of thy desires*: that's the general scope of this verse; more particularly.

Even so would he have removed thee out of a strait into a broad place. Some read the verse with a retro-respect, or as looking back to the time past; as if *Elihu* had bid *Job* remember his former experiences, whether God heretofore dealt not bountifully with him. To this sense (besides others) *Mr. Broughton* translates, *which*

hath

Sic etiam avertetur to ab ore angustiæ in latitudinem, cui non suberat pressura & ferculum mensæ tuæ plenum erat pinguedine. Jun.

hath turned thee from distresses mouth, to largeness, where is no straitness, and that which was laid upon thy table was full of fatness: and he gives the gloss upon his own translation thus; *God once made thee wealthy, and would again*; thou hast had experience how good a master, and how liberal the Lord is to those that serve him, thou thy self didst enjoy prosperity a long time farre from all trouble, or touch of affliction. Thus, (I say) some refer the words to the time past; but I rather keep to our own translation, which expresseth the original text, as an assurance of what *Job* should have had, and might have expected in time, had he complied as he ought, with the purpose of God in his afflictions.

Even so would he have removed thee out of a strait into a broad place. As if he had said, *God who useth and loveth to deliver the poor out of affliction, would also have delivered thee out of thy affliction had'st thou been humbled under thy affliction, had'st thou fallen down before him, hadst thou submitted the matter to him, and not disputed it with him as thou hast done, hadst thou confessed his justice, and not accused it or complained about it, even so would he have removed thee*, &c. The word which we translate *to remove*, signifieth also

דוסא *est proprie incurvare, fere ad maturi, tradice* סוח

To move or to perswade; because he that perswades another, moveth or removeth him from his opinion or intendment, or from what his practise was before, and brings him to be or do somwhat that he did not, or was not, before. To be perswaded is to be inwardly moved, to be moved in mind: And therefore they who perswade or entice others to evil, are said to turn them from the Lord, and to thrust them out of the way which the Lord commandeth them to walk in (*Deut.* 13. 5.) To perswade in any degree, is to move (*Josh.* 15. 18.) and some perswade so strongly, that they make in others great removes.

Ex eadem radice variæ locutiones & interpretationes pullulavant. Pined.

Further, It signifies to deceive, as will appear if you compare Text and Margin; 2 *Kings* 18. 32. and those Texts, 2 *Chron.* 32. 11, 15. all concerning one matter. He that is deceived, is usually deceived by perswasion, and is drawn away by some enticements.

Now, because he that perswadeth or deceiveth another, endeavoureth to turn or remove him from what he holdeth or intendeth, to the contrary, therefore (as we render) this word signifies also *to remove*, to bring from one place to another, or from one

one state to another. *He would have removed, or translated thee*

Out of a streight into a broad place.

Here are two sorts of places, a streight, and a broad place: What a streight place, properly taken, is, all know. The Hebrew is, *He would have removed thee out of the mouth of the streight.* The *Septuagint* render, *He would have removed thee out of the mouth of the enemy.* An enemy puts us to streights; and therefore the same word signifies a streight and an enemy: *he would have removed thee out of a streight place*; the hand of an enemy is so. But more generally, by the *streight place*, we are to understand any kind of tribulation or trouble whatsoever. Troubles of any sort are justly called streights, for they inclose and imprison us, they abridge us of our liberty, they ty us short up, where we can scarce stir or breath. A man in trouble, is a man in streights. Some expound these words allegorically, taking the *mouth of the streight* for Hells mouth; they that descend thither, are indeed in everlasting streights; for, though *Tophet be deep and large*, as the Prophet speaks (*Isa.* 30. 33.) yet all that are there, are in streights. Hell is large to take in, but streight to let out, so streight, that it will not let one out for ever. Others expound it tropologically, or with respect to manners; *he would have delivered thee out of the mouth of the streight*, that is, from the power of thy sins and corruptions, for they indeed are streights; and though we easily fall into them, yet we hardly get out, or free of them again. But we need not take up, either Allegories, or Tropologies; the words are plain. That which *Elihu* here intends by *streights*, is great trouble, deep misery, into which a man being cast, knows neither how to subsist, nor how to escape; Yet out of that *streight place* he promiseth deliverance; *He would have removed thee out of a streight*

עֵר *Angustiis et adversariis. Hinc* Septuaginta *reddunt,* ἐκ στόματος ἐχθρᾶς.

Into a broad place;

That is, to liberty and prosperity, which are in Scripture compared to a broad place, where a man hath room enough. *Thou hast known my Soul in adversity* (saith *David*, Psal. 31. 7, 8.) *and hast not shut me up in the hand of the enemy*; *thou hast set my feet in a large Room*, that is, in a prosperous condition. Thus *Elihu*

Gehenna est ampla ad recipiendum, et angusta ad emittendum.

De puteo fecisti et privas conjectudines, cum ingressus facilis exitus præcaveatur. Gregor.

Os inferni est ingens civitas, abyssus miserorum in quam deversus homo, neq; subsistere, neq; evergere potest.

here promiseth on Gods behalf, *He would have removed thee out of a streight, into a large place,*

Where no streightness is;

Spatium latum est, non latissimum, ubi nulla angustia est.

That's a broad place indeed. *No streightness* implyeth greatest enlargement, or enlargment to the uttermost, not only of need, but desire. *A broad place, where there is no streightness,* is full liberty, or full of liberty. A man may be in a very good, in a very free condition, and yet have some streights. To be in so good a condition, as to have no streights at all, is the top and perfection of freedom. And surely, The full attainment of such an enlargedness, is the reward of the next life, not the enjoyment of this life. The way of the wicked, in this life, is most streightly broad; the way of the righteous, in this life, is broadly streight, and endeth in a broadness of everlasting blessedness. God at last will *remove all his out of a streight, into a broad place, where there is no streightness.* Hence,

Via impiorum est lata angustissima; via justorum est angusta latissima, et definit in latitudinem jucundissimam.

First, See, the Author of our deliverance is again here remembred, *He would have removed &c.* As before, *he delivereth the poor in afflictions,* so here again, *He would have removed thee out of a streight, into a broad place.* As all our mercies are of the Lord, so let us acknowledge him in all.

Secondly, From the Allusion, Note;

Troubles are streights.

He is in a streight, that knows not what to do; thus 'tis often with us in our troubles. It was so with good *Jehoshaphat* (2 Chro. 20 12.) when a mighty Enemy came up against him, *Lord* (said he) *we know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee*; he was in a streight, what to do here on earth, but he had a broad place to look to, even to heaven, to the Lord of heaven and earth, *our eyes are towards thee.* As if he had said, *Lord we are in a streight, but thou art never in streights; Lord counsel us what to do, Lord help us to do it.* The afflicted, many a time, *know not what to do,* and many times, they cannot do what they know; they know this thing would do them good, but they cannot do it, they know, that might be helpfull to them, but they cannot reach it.

He is in a streight that doubts what good to chuse, much more is he in a streight who seeth that what-ever he chuseth, he must chuse

chuse some evil. *Paul* was in the former streight, and *David* in the latter: *Paul* was in a streight, it was a trouble to him, being doubtfull, which good to chuse, (*Phil.* 1. 23.) *I am in a streight betwixt two*; betwixt what two? betwixt two very good things, namely, living here in doing good, and going to heaven to receive his reward; he was in a streight whether to live here to do more work, or to go to heaven to receive the reward of his work. 'Tis some trouble, but a blessed trouble, when we are in a doubt which good to chuse. But they are in very great trouble, who are in such a streight, that whatsoever they chuse, they must chuse evil: That was *Davids* streight, (2 *Sam.* 24. 14.) the Lord gave him a choyce, and a very sad one, of three evils, either of famine, or of pestilence, or of flying and falling before his Enemies; hereupon *David* said, *I am in a great streight*; somewhat he must chuse, and what-ever he chose, it was evil, that is, penal evil; but seeing it was so, and could not be otherwise, (*e malis minimum*) he would chuse the least, he chose to fall into the hand of God, rather than into the hands of men. Into such kind of streights are the people of God sometimes cast, they have somewhat before them to chuse, but what-ever they chuse, it is very hard, and troublesome; troublesome to stay, and troublesome to go, troublesome to abide by it, and troublesome to flie from it, every way it is a trouble; and how many of the precious people of God have been brought into these troubles! Only this is their comfort as well as their duty, that though they may be in such streights as necessitate them to chuse a less good, or a penal evil, yet as God will not, so man cannot bring them into any such streights as necessitate them to chuse a moral or sinful evil. Troubles are streights. *He would have removed thee out of a streight into a broad place.*

Hence Note, Thirdly;

What-ever streights we are in, God is able to inlarge us.

The hand of the Lord is not shortned that it cannot save, (Isa. 59. 1.) There is no streight so strict, but the Lord can open it, and remove us out of it, or it from us. When the Children of *Israel* were in that great streight, having the Sea before them, and *Pharaoh* with his Host behind them, the Lord removed them out of that streight, and brought them into a large place. There are a

thouſand inſtances and experiences of this. *David* ſaith, (*Pſal.* 130. 1.) *Out of the depths have I cryed unto thee O Lord:* The depth there, and ſtreight here, are the ſame under ſeveral Alluſions. *David* cryed out of the depth of miſery: when he was at the bottome of the pit, he cryed unto God, and was delivered. We can be in no depth, but the power and mercy of God can reach a hand to us, and draw us out; we can be in no ſtreight, but the power of God can, and his love will make roome for us, that we may eſcape. *Seeing then* (as one of the Ancients ſpeaks fully to this poynt) *God will help becauſe he is ſo merciful, and can becauſe he is ſo powerful, that man ſhuts the doore of hope againſt himſelf, who thinks, or through unbelief fears, that either God will not or cannot help him.* And therefore when at any time we are in a ſtreight, let the greatneſs of our ſtreights, be the exerciſe of our faith, not a diſcouragement to it. Some make their ſtreights a ſtop to their faith, they cannot believe they ſhall be delivered out of great ſtreights; but the greatneſs of our ſtreights, ſhould quicken, not deaden our faith, it ſhould encreaſe our faith, not weaken it; and ſo it will, if we conſider who it is that undertakes to remove his people out of their ſtreights; it is the great God; and the more their ſtreights are, the greater their difficulties are, the greater is his glory in removing any of them into a large place. 'Tis ſaid in the *Pſalm*, *The Lord makes a way for his anger*; he doth do ſo ſometimes, he makes a broad way for his anger; yet remember he makes a way for his love and mercy too, that his great power may be ſeen in opening our greateſt ſtreights.

Dum deus velit miſereri quia bonus eſt, & poſſit quia omnipotens eſt ipſe contra ſe divinæ pietatis januam claudit, qui deum ſibi aut non velle aut non poſſe miſereri credit. Auguſt: Ser: 88. de Temp:

Fourthly, Whereas, 'tis not only ſaid, *He would remove thee into a large place*, but, *into a large place, where there is no ſtreightneſs.*

Obſerve;

God can bring his afflicted people perfectly out of ſtreights, and ſet them out of the reach of danger.

Our comforts in this world are uſually mixed with ſorrows, our enlargements with ſtreights; yet the Lord is able to give us ſorrowleſs comforts, and ſuch enlargements as ſhall not have the leaſt ſhadow of a ſtreight in them. As Jeſus Chriſt ſaveth us to the uttermoſt of ſoul ſtreights, or we are ſaved through Chriſt to the uttermoſt of our ſins, that is, of our guilt and danger of condemnation

demnation by ſin; ſo he can ſave us alſo to the uttermoſt of outward troubles, he can give a perfect temporal ſalvation, ſuch a ſalvation as ſhall have nothing of feare or danger in this life: *Elihu* ſpeaks of ſuch a ſalvation. The Lord can ſave us to the uttermoſt of preſent perils, and ſet us beyond the reach of peril, even in ſuch a place, where there ſhall be no feare, no ſuſpicion of annoyance. 'Tis ſaid (*Pro.* 10. 22.) *The bleſſing of the Lord maketh rich, and he giveth no ſorrow with it.* The Lord makes ſome men rich, or gives them a great eſtate, yet they find ſorrow enough with it; but the Lord, through his bleſſing, can give riches, and add no ſorrow with it, put no gravell in our bread, nor gall in our cup, but all ſhall be ſweet to us; that's bringing us into a large place, where there is no preſent ſtreightneſs, no, nor appearing cauſe to feare any. Thus the Nations are brought in rejoycing at the fall of *Babylon*, (Iſa. 14. 7, 8.) *The whole earth is at reſt, and is quiet, they break forth into ſinging, yea the fir-trees rejoyce at thee, and the Cedars of Lebanon, ſaying, ſince thou art laid down, no feller is come up againſt us.* The Lord will work full deliverance for his people by *Babylons* fall; when that falls, *Sion* ſhall not feare the coming of any more *fellers*, Chriſt will then give his faithfull people ſuch enlargement as ſhall know no ſtreights.

Poſitio vel requies. Heb: *a radice* נוח *quod eſt requieſcere Metonymia adjuncti.* Piſc: *Eſt abſtractum pro concreto, poſitio & requies, pro iis quæ ſuper menſam deponuntur a ſerculariis; Quemadmodum jumenta vocantur,* ſervitus hominum, *quia hominibus ſerviunt.* Bold: *Vicinæ ſunt radices* נוח *quievit &* ינח *poſuit; quod enim ponitur in aliquo loco, ponitur ut requieſcat.* Merc:

This is the firſt alluſion; *He would have removed thee out of the ſtreight into a broad place, where there is no ſtreightneſs*; it followeth,

And that which ſhould be ſet on thy Table, ſhould be full of fatneſs.

Here's the ſecond mercy. As if he had ſaid, *The Lord would not have given thee a bare deliverance out of evil, but thou ſhould'ſt have received abundance of good*; thou ſhouldſt not only have roome enough, but comfort enough;

That which ſhould be ſet on thy Table, ſhould be full of fatneſs.

Some render, *That which reſteth, or abideth on thy Table*; that is, thy meat, and thy drink, thy wine, and thy oyle, that which thou feedeſt upon, ſhould be of the beſt and moſt nouriſhing, not bare commons, not ordinary fare, but

Full

Full of fatness.

Fatness is put in Scripture to express the best of things; it often signifieth the best of spiritual things, (*Psal.* 36.8.) *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house.* The house of God is the Church of God, and, *God keeps a good house*, there are fat things, and they who worship and wait upon him, they shall have abundance of them, their full satisfaction the fatness of Gods house, is the riches of Grace, the best of Gospel-Ordinances and promises, the best of Gospel-comforts and mercies, these are the fatness of the house of God; these are the things which the Apostle intended while he told the Gentiles, (*Rom.* 11. 17.) *That they were partakers of the root and fatness of the Olive tree.* Thus also spake the Propher, (*Isa.* 25. 6.) *In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make a feast of fat things*: what, of such fat things as the Epicures of the world surfet upon, Sheep, and Oxen, &c? no; the *feast of fat things* which the Lord will make to his people is of spiritual things, they shall have much of Christ, much of grace here, and an assurance of glory for hereafter; *This is the feast of fat things.* And though the Lord give to any of his servants the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction; though the fig-tree should not blossome to them, though they should have neither Sheep in the fold, nor Calves in the stall, yet they may daily sit at this feast of fat things, and be filled with joy in the Lord, (*Hab.* 3. 17, &c.)

And as fatness is used in Scripture to express the best of spiritual things, so fatness expresseth the best of natural and outward good things, (*Psal.* 65. 11.) *Thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness*; that is, plenty, and plenty of the best things, which grow out of the earth by the blessing and benigne influences of Heaven. I conceive spiritual good things, the best of them, are also shadowed under those expressions of Temporal.

Lautissimè suavissimèq; vivet.

Further, *Elihu* doth not only say, *That which shall be set upon thy Table shall be fat*, but, *full of fatness*; which implyeth thus much. Thou shalt have whatsoever may make thy life comfortable, and happy; for as by bread, our *dayly bread*, we are to understand all the necessaries of this life (though bread be the meanest part of our sustenance, yet it is called the *staff of life*, because the most necessary part of it) so by *fatness*, we are to understand all things delicate

delicate and delicious; and those things which are most delicate and delicious, are said to be *full of fatness.*

Hence Note;

First, *God, who delivereth his people from trouble, or out of straights, can also fill and furnish them with comforts.*

The mercy of God doth not only take away evil, and so leave us, it doth not only bring us out of our straights, and there set us down; but mercy proceeds to the bestowing of good upon us. As we in obedience should not put off the Lord with abstaining from evil, but ought to do good, even abundance of good, and not only bring forth good, but much good fruit; that's our duty; so the Lords mercy stayeth not in delivering us from evil, but bestoweth good things, the best things upon us, and them in abundance.

Secondly, In that those good things are expresst *by fatness*, or *by being full of fatness*,

Note;

The Lord thinks nothing too good for his good people.

When once a people, or a person are accepted of God, he [illegible] no cost, nor thinks any thing too costly for them, the most [illegible]ous things in the world are not too good for them, (*Psal.* [illegible] *He would have fed them also with the finest of the wheat, and honey out of the rocks should I have satisfied thee.* I would [illegible] fed them with wheat only, that's good, but with the finest wheat, that's the best; we put in the Margin, *with the fat of wheat*; they should not have had the bran, but the flowre and the finest of the flowre! they should have had not only honey, but honey out of the Rock, which, as Naturalists observe, is the best and purest honey. Surely God cannot think any thing of this world too good for his people, who hath not thought the next world too good for them; Certainly God cannot think any of these outward enjoyments too good for his people, who hath not thought his Son too good for his people; that's the Apostles argument, (*Rom* 8. 32.) *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* even the best of outward good things, when he seeth it good for us.

In this see the difference of the spirit of the world, and of God,

to

to his people. The world thinks nothing bad enough for thoſe that are the choyceſt ſervants of God, they are ſorry to ſee that they have any thing that is good; that they have a morſel of bread, or a penny in their purſes, is thought too much for them by the world: And if any trouble befall them, it's good enough for them, will the World ſay. The World thinks any thing too good for the choyceſt ſervants of God, how much more the choyceſt things! But God hath other thoughts towards them, he thinks nothing too good for them, they *ſhall be filled with fatneſs*.

Thirdly, In that *Elihu* makes promiſe of theſe outward things, to the choyce ſervants of God, whoſe ears are open to attend unto him;

Note;

Even outward mercies, and a full Portion of outward mercies, fall ſometimes to the ſhare of the faithful ſervants of God in this World.

Though ſuch are not of this World, much leſs are ſervants to the World, yet God can make the world ſerve them with its beſt, and give them a full portion of the World, though the World be not their portion. The ſervants of God would not take all the World, if it were offered them, for their portion, no not a thouſand Worlds, conſidering what a periſhing thing this World is, and that at beſt it is but a finite thing; I ſay, a ſervant of God would not take all the World, at the hand of God, for his portion, though he is thankful for any thing, for a little of it, and unworthy of any, the leaſt, part of it. Howbeit, many times God gives a large portion of this World to his people, and that which he ſets upon their Table, that is, outward good, is *full of fatneſs*. Indeed ſome of the choyce ſervants of God have been afraid when they have ſeen much of the World come in, leaſt God ſhould put them off with ſuch worldly things; when their Table hath been full of fatneſs and dainties, when they have had Houſes and Lands, Gold and Silver plenty, they have been troubled, leaſt God ſhould ſay to them, There is your All. It is ſaid of *Luther*, when he had a conſiderable preſent ſent him from a great Prince (the Duke of *Savony*, as I remember) this came upon his heart, *I hope God will not put me off with theſe things*, with gifts from Princes; I ſhall be hungry as long as I live, if I have nothing to feed upon but what

what is of the World, and poor as long as I live, if I have no other treaſure, but what is earthly; & thereupon *proteſted he would not be ſatisfied with the beſt things of this World*, though *content with any thing*. Thus, I ſay, God deals bountifully, with a liberal hand, to ſome of his people eſpecially. This was made good in the former, or Old Teſtament times, when the promiſes went more upon externals (as hath been ſhewed) whereas now they go more upon ſpiritual and heavenly things; yet there wants not examples of Gods dealing bountifully in outwards with his faithful ſervants under the Goſpel, he hath cauſed that which was ſet upon their Table, to be full of fatneſs.

This is the firſt part of the Application, wherein *Elihu* acquaints *Job* what God would have done for him, if he had carried it humbly (as he ſhould) under his afflicting hand, he had been out of his fetters and bonds before that time, and ſet in a large place, he had not fed ſo long upon aſhes, his Table had *been full of fatneſs*.

As in this verſe *Elihu* applyed the matter to *Job*, by ſhewing him how it ſhould have fared with him, or how graciouſly and bountifully God would have dealt with him, if he had humbled himſelf, as he ought, and been duly affected with the afflicting hand then upon him, ſo in the following verſe, he applyeth the Doctrine to him, by telling him, that the reaſon why he was at the preſent in ſuch an afflicted condition, was, becauſe he had not ſo humbled himſelf in his affliction.

Verſ. 17. *But thou haſt fulfilled the Judgment of the wicked, therefore Judgment and Juſtice take hold on thee.*

This is a home Application indeed, he ſpeaks to his face, *Thou haſt done it, thou haſt fulfilled the Judgment of the wicked*; which is, as a home, ſo a very hard and heavy charge. Take a twofold Interpretation of it.

Firſt, Some expound it (I think not rightly) of *Jobs* ill carriage in the time of his proſperity; as if *Elihu* had reflected upon that: Thou haſt heretofore *fulfilled the Judgment of the wicked*, and that, Firſt, by a general ill courſe of life. As Chriſt ſaith to the *Phariſees* (Math. 23. 32.) *Fill ye up the meaſure of your fathers*; ſome conceive *Elihu* ſpeaking to *Job* in that ſence, *Thou haſt filled up the meaſure of the wicked*, following them in their

Actum impii implevisti, q.d. *Optimi et incorrupti judicis Officio defunsti, impii munus et partes obiisti.* Cajet.

Sed receptissima vocis Originalis sententia est Judicium, non Officium. Pined.

evil wayes. Secondly, That in his Magistratical capacity, or that being a Magistrate, he *had fulfilled the Judgment of the wicked*; that is, what wicked men, and their bad Causes wanted of weight and truth, of righteousnes and goodnes, that he filled up by favour, by accepting their persons, and giving countenance to their wickednes. Some charge him thus directly, *Thou hast done the part or Office of an unjust Judg*; when thou hadst power in thy hand, thou wast defective, short, or wanting, in discharging the Duty of an upright Judge, but didst the work of a corrupt Judge (corrupting Judgment) to the full; therefore now *Justice and Judgment take hold of thee.* But (as I said before) this is not a right Exposition of the Text; for *Elihu* never charged *Job* with a sinful course of life in former times, or before his affliction (as his friends had done) though he charged him with much sin in his carriage under his afflictions; and it may be conceived, that *Job* heard *Elihu* more patiently and equally than he heard his friends, because *Elihu* dealt more equally and candidly with him, than his Friends did; he did not lay it upon him, as if in the foregoing part of his life he had traded in wickedness; but only reproved him for his boldness, in dealing with, and appealing so often unto God, in his soars and sickness; or, because his spirit was not broken enough, notwithstanding those sore breakings and sicknesses, with which he was afflicted. So then, *Elihu* in saying this, intended not that *Job had fulfilled the Judgment of the wicked*, either by a wicked conversation, or by perverting Justice in favour of the wicked: Such a charge had been utterly inconsistent with the Testimony which God gave of him in the first Chapter of this Book.

Therefore Secondly, *Thou hast fulfilled the judgement of the wicked*, may be understood, first, that *Job* had gone near, in his behaviour under his affliction, to do even almost as Satan boasted, and presumed to God he would do, in the second Chapter, that if God did but lay his hand home or closer upon him, and touch his bone and his flesh, then (said Satan) *he will curse thee to thy face.* Now, though *Job* did never, in the height, fulfill this wicked opinion or judgement of the Devil concerning him, yet by his often complainings of, and murmurings about the severe dealings of God with him, and his not pitying him in his distress, he verged upon it, he came somewhat towards, and much too near the

the fulfilling of that judgement of the wicked one; and *Elihu* might say, *Thou hast fulfilled the judgement of the wicked*, thou hast done (in a degree or shew) as the Devil said thou wouldst, if the hand of God were heavy upon thy body.

Secondly, These words, *Thou hast fulfilled the judgement of the wicked*, may have this meaning, Thou hast rendred thy self guilty of, or obnoxious to, that judgement which God useth to pronounce and execute upon wicked men.

Thirdly, *Thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked*; that is, thou under the hand of God hast carried thy self as wicked men usually do, thou hast imitated them in a great measure. What do wicked men when the hand of God is upon them? they rage and murmur, they toyl themselves and are full of the fury of the Lord, as a wild Bull in a net; thou seemest to have fulfilled this judgment of the wicked, for thou hast been so far from humbling thy self, as thou oughtest, that thou hast stood it out and stouted it with God, and desired a day of hearing; Hast thou not in all this *fulfilled the judgment of the wicked?* In the 34th chapter of this book at the 8th verse, *Elihu* told *Job*, *that he had gone in company with the wicked*, that is, that he had taken the same course with the wicked, and as they use to do in the day of their calamity. And that's the meaning of *Elihu's* charge here, *Thou hast fulfilled the judgement of the wicked*, that is, thou hast carried thy self too too like wicked men in the day of thy trouble. Thus *Job* is here censured, not strictly, as if he had done like wicked men, but because he did not suffer so patiently as became a good man; this was in him a *fulfilling of the judgment of the wicked.*

Mora impiorum causam tuam egisti impatienter contra dum murmurando. Sanct.

Hence note;

Not to submit heartily, and humble our selves freely, when the afflicting hand of God is upon us, is to do very sinfully, even like the wicked.

I shall not stay upon this, having spoken of the extream sinfulness of murmuring and impatience under the hand of God heretofore.

Secondly, Note;

If we give way to any corruption, or passion, it will quickly carry us a very great way in sin, and from our duty.

They that are good in their state, may sometimes in their acts, (as *Job* here) *fulfil the judgment of the wicked.* As hypocrites fulfil, in appearance, the judgment of the upright, that is, do like upright men; so the upright may, in appearance, do like hypocrites, and then they also fulfil the judgement of the wicked. *Job* said to his wife, in the second chapter, *Thou speakest like a foolish woman*; and now *Elihu* tells him, thou hast spoken and done *as a wicked man.*

Note, Thirdly;

They who do like the wicked, must not think much if they be numbred with the wicked, and involved in the same outward evils and judgments which usually fall upon wicked men.

Though we may not judge such a mans eternal estate like that of the wicked, yet as to this or that act, we may (without breach of charity) number him among the wicked, and he may quickly feel the same smart which the wicked feel. They that are godly should act like godly men, and not do any thing that represents the lusts or practises, the judgement or conversation of the ungodly; lest it be said (in one sence or other) of them, as here *Elihu* of *Job*, you also have *fulfilled the judgement of the wicked.*

Therefore judgment and justice take hold of thee.

As if he had said, I told thee before, if thou had'st humbled thy self, thou shouldest have had a large place, and full table, store of mercies and favours; but *now judgment and justice take* רִיב וּמִשְׁפָּט *hold of thee.* Here are two words which sometimes are used distinctly, but here they signifie the same thing, or the one is but an explanation of the other. *Justice and Judgment*; some take *justice* for the habit, and *judgment* for the act, exercise or decree; as if he had said, *Justice hath sent forth Judgment upon thee, and now both take hold of thee*; God hath noted thy sin in thy sad condition. Yet the original doth not determine it upon *Jobs* person expressly, it doth not say, *Justice and Judgment take hold of thee*, but *Justice and Judgment take hold*; we supply *they take hold of thee*, for that's it which *Elihu* intends; *Justice and Judgment* take hold of thee, *O Job*, nor will they let thee go. We find the word so used in several places, (*Prov.* 3. 18.) *Wisdom is a tree of*

of life to them that lay hold upon her. And as the believers closing with and hold-fast upon Christ is expressed by this word, so also is the hold which sin takes of an unbeliever (*Prov.* 5. 22.) *His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sin. Judgment and Justice take hold of thee.*

Hence Note; First,

God will not indulge sin in any, no not in his own servants.

If a *Job* do like wicked men, he shall smart like the wicked. Though God will not cast any of his servants to hell for ever, yet they may be cast into a temporary hell. The Lord told *David* as much, in case his Children should disobey him, and break covenant with him, though he would not cast them off, yet they should pay dearly for it; *He would visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes*, (Psal. 89. 32.) The History of *Davids* children makes good that Prophesie, and so hath the dealings of God with believers in all ages, who are the seed, the children of *David* mystical, that is, of Christ, whom and whose spiritual children the Spirit of God chiefly pointed at in that Psalm. They that do like evil men, shall suffer like evil men. Justice and Judgment properly and strictly take hold of the wicked and disobedient only, as the Apostle saith (1 *Tim.* 1. 9.) *The Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient*, &c. Yet when they that are righteous are found doing like the *lawless and disobedient, the Law*, that is Justice and Judgment will take hold of them.

Tygurina legit intransitive; Causa & judicium retinebunt, i. e, *sustent. bunt vigorem suum quamdiu impius in suis.*

Again, Some read the words intransitively, *Justice and Judgment shall hold, or hold on still*, that is, *they will hold on their course or way in punishing*, as long as thou hold'st on thy course or way in sinning.

Hence note;

So long as any man lives in any sinful way, he shall find Justice and Judgement taking hold of him. Justice will not leave sinners till they have left their sins.

Again, *Justice and Judgment take hold of thee*, that is, they hold thee fast.

Hence note;

There's no getting out of the hand of divine Justice.

Man

Men oftentimes get out of the hand of man's juſtice, they can break priſon, they can file off their fetters and caſt their cords from them; but none can break Gods priſon, none can get out of the hands of divine Juſtice. As Juſtice and Judgement ſhall take hold of, attach and arreſt ſinners, ſo they will hold them faſt, they cannot make an eſcape, nor can any reſcue them till God ſignes a warrant for their releaſe. We cannot hinder God in the exerciſe or execution of Juſtice, nor turn him aſide from his purpoſe, either by our power or pollicies. God can eaſily hinder men of their purpoſes, and can undo what-ever they have done, but none can make the Juſtice and Judgment of God let go their hold. Therefore let us take heed, while we hold ſin and iniquity, nothing can deliver us from the hand, or hold off the ſin-chaſtning and avenging hand of God. However men fail, the Juſtice and Judgment of God are everlaſting; they hold on their courſe ſtill though men do not. Though we could pluck the Sun out of the firmament, yet not Juſtice out of the hand of God. We can neither put God beſides his rule, nor force him from his purpoſe. Theſe are the two great Prerogatives of God, he hath firſt a righteouſneſs which cannot be perverted; ſecondly, a Juſtice which cannot be interrupted.

JOB,

JOB, Chap. 36. Verſ. 18, 19 20.

18. *Becauſe there is wrath, beware leſt he take thee away with his ſtroke: then a great ranſom cannot deliver thee.*

19. *Will he eſteem thy riches? no, not gold, nor all the forces of ſtrength.*

20. *Deſire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.*

IN theſe three verſes *Elihu* preſſeth the Application of the former Doctrine upon *Job*, by way of admonition and counſel; foraſmuch as he had done amiſs before, and carried himſelf unduly under the hand of God, even ſo far as to *fulfil the counſel of the wicked*, that therefore he would now, & for the time to come, take heed, and be more wary.

And leſt *Job* ſhould ſlight this admonition or counſel, *Elihu* adds a powerful motive to urge that duty upon him, even the wrath of God; *Beware*, Why?

Becauſe there is wrath;

Beware, and beware *leſt* (this wrath breaking forth) *he take thee away with a ſtroke*. And how dreadful the wrath of God is, *Elihu* ſhews in theſe three verſes by a threefold Conſideration.

Firſt, becauſe if we fall into the Lords hand, when he is in wrath, there is no meanes under heaven that can deliver or bring us off. This he aſſerteth at the latter end of the 18th verſe, *Then a great ranſome cannot deliver thee.* It is dangerous coming under that wrath, from which a ranſome, eſpecially a great ranſome, cannot deliver. What that ranſome is which cannot deliver us is expreſſed in the 19th verſe, *Will he eſteem thy riches? no, not gold.*

A Second motive to beware of this dreadful wrath is this, becauſe if once the wrath of God be up, as there is no ranſom, ſo no power in the creature that can deliver. That we have in the latter part of the 19th verſe, *nor all the forces of ſtrength*; though thou haſt armies, millions of men in armes, yea though thou haſt legi-

ons

ons of Angels in pay, yet they cannot prevail, all *the forces of ſtrength* cannot deliver thee.

There is alſo a third conſideration, to ſhew the unavoidableneſs of the wrath of God, namely, becauſe there is no fleeing no making an eſcape from it. Some indeed are ſo angry that you cannot ſatisfy them with a ranſom, and ſo powerful that no ſtrength can deliver you from their power, yet poſſibly you may make an eſcape and hide from them, you may get out of the way and lye out of ſight; but ſaith *Elihu*, that will not do neither in this caſe, (v. 20.) *deſire not the night when people are cut off in their place*; the night or darkneſs will be no cover to thee from the wrath of an angry God. Thus you have the ſum and ſubſtance of this admonition to *Job*, *Beware, becauſe there is wrath*, and that wrath of God ſo terrible that nothing can deliver from it, no ranſom, no power, nor can we deliver our ſelves by flight, or by darkneſs.

I ſhall now open the words more diſtinctly.

חמה *calor, ira, a* יחם *caluit, incaluit, quod iracundi incaleſcunt.*

Verſe 18. *Becauſe there is wrath, beware, &c.*

The word which we tranſlate *wrath*, comes from a root that ſignifies *heat*, or to *be hot*; and we know they that are angry and in wrath are very hot, their mind and ſpirit are enflamed, we uſe to ſay to an angry man, *why are you ſo hot*: the wrath of man is hot: the wrath of God, is certainly much hotter.

Becauſe there is wrath; but where is it? I anſwer, Firſt, there is wrath, in the breaſt or heart of God, there his anger is kindled againſt ſinners. Secondly, There is wrath in the decree of God, againſt ſinners (*Zeph.* 2. 2.) Thirdly, there is wrath in the threatnings of God, there it firſt appeares and breaketh forth (*Deut.* 29. 20.) So the Apoſtle (*Rom.* 1. 18.) *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven.* How is it revealed? As his love is revealed in promiſes, ſo his wrath in threatnings. Fourthly, there is wrath in the works of God, in his Judgments acted upon the children of men. As there is wrath hidden in his breaſt and decreed, ſo wrath is heard from his mouth in terrible threatnings, and ſeen in his hand by terrible Judgments executed upon his enemies. We may ſee wrath in the dealings of God; his works tell us he is angry. Therefore fear to perſiſt, leſt in his anger he take thee quite away. We ſhould beware of ſinful works, leſt we provoke and ſtir up the Lords anger to make bloody work. *There is wrath*, (particularly

larly as to the dealings of God with thee, *O Job*, ſaith *Elihu*) therefore,

Beware.

The word *beware*, is not expreſly in the Hebrew text, but it is plainly intended, and ſupplied by Interpreters, in general, to make up and clear the ſence of this verſe. We have a like reading in the 36th of *Iſaiah*, *v.* 18. *Beware leſt Hezekiah perſwade you*, &c. The word *beware*, is a ſupplement added there in a different character, to ſhew that it is not expreſſed in the Hebrew. As if *Rabſhakeh* had ſaid, If *Hezekiah* perſwade you to ſtand out againſt my Maſter *Sennacherib*, you will provoke his wrath to your utter ruine and deſtruction, therefore *beware*. There, as here, *beware*, beſpeakes our caution; becauſe there is wrath, take heed what you do or ſay.

Hence note, Firſt;

There is a wrath of God againſt ſin, or, God will appear in wrath againſt ſinners.

The Apoſtle *John* in his firſt Epiſtle (*Chap.* 4. 8.) tells us in a direct predication, *God is love*; and 'tis as true, *God is wrath.* The wrath of God is a divine perfection, it is the perfection of God, as his love is. God is one and the ſame, he is not divided into ſeveral paſſions, perturbations or affections; but thus the Scripture ſpeaks of him, to denote what we may expect from him, and what he is and will be in his actings towards them who obey him not.

Secondly note;

The wrath of God appears and is put forth in his works of judgment.

As the goodneſs of God is his love acted, or as the good things which God doth for us are love-actions, ſo the evils that are upon us are wrath-actions. I do not ſay that every evil which we endure in this world is the acting of wrath upon us, but I ſay, there is wrath in the actings of evil upon us. *Moſes* ſaid to *Aaron*, (*Numb.* 16. 46.) *Go quickly, take a Cenſer* (haſt, haſt) *and make an atonement, there is wrath gone out.* How did he know wrath was gone out? He tells us in the next words, *the plagues is*

 begun;

begun: He saw wrath in that dispensation of God; the plague begun argued that God was angry. *Because there is wrath, beware.*

Hence note, Thirdly;

We should by all meanes take heed and beware of the wrath of God.

The wrath of man is a small matter to the wrath of God, yet we are very careful to beware of the wrath of man, especially of great men. The wrath of the Kings and Princes of the world, is like the roaring of the Lion, saith *Solomon*, and we are ready to tremble at that; but O how should we tremble at, and beware of the wrath of God! *Who knoweth the power of thine anger?* (*Psal.* 90. 11.) We may take some scantling, some measure of the wrath of man, and know how far it can go, and what it can do; but we can take no measure of the wrath of God, for it is immesurable, and therefore we should avoid every thing that procures his wrath. That's the meaning of this caveat; do nothing that blowes up or incenses the wrath of God. But what is it that blowes up wrath? It is sin, every sin hath that in it which may blow up wrath. The Apostle saith, *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*, not only against this or that ungodliness, nor only against this or that degree of ungodliness, ('tis neither against ungodliness of some special kind, nor of some special degree) but against all ungodliness, therefore all ungodliness and all unrighteousness is to be avoided.

And as we should do nothing to provoke wrath, so we should do every thing which may prevent wrath (*Psal.* 2. 12.) *Kiss the Son*, why? *lest he be angry, and his wrath kindle.* Who is the Son, and what's this kissing of the Son which prevents wrath? The Son is Christ, he is the Son of God; this kissing is a kiss of homage, an humble submission to Jesus Christ by faith and obedience; it is a Gospel receiving of Christ: to kiss the Son is to receive Christ as our King, as our Priest, as our Prophet, to receive Christ in the whole manifestation of his Mediatorship. Do this to prevent wrath, kiss the Son. And consider how terrible he reports that wrath to be; *If his wrath be kindled but a little, blessed are they that put their trust in him.* Oh then take heed that you do not provoke the wrath of God, and do your utmost to prevent it; which

which nothing can do but kissing the Son, that will and that only can do it; submit to Jesus Christ, receive Jesus Christ, without him it is impossible to prevent wrath. He that believes not, *the wrath of God abideth on him*, (*John* 3. 36.) Jesus Christ alone is he which delivereth us from the wrath to come, (1 *Thes.* 1. 10.) And if we further consider this wrath from the expression, both of the Psalm and of the Text, it should make us (who are so fearful of, and who so shift from the wrath of men) exceedingly afraid of the wrath of God. The word, as was shewed before, comes from a root which signifieth the heat of fire, implying that the wrath of God is fire, and (*Heb.* 10. 27.) it is called *fiery indignation*; yea, God himself (*Heb.* 12. 29.) is called *a consuming fire.* Why doth the Scripture express him and his wrath, by fire? Surely because fire is well known to us, and we are well able to conceive how dreadful a thing fire is, when it is in its rage and fury, when it hath got the mastery; *Fire is a comfortable servant, but a dreadful master.* Now as fire is the most dreadful element, so wrath is the most dreadful attribute of God; yet I may say, that elementary fire which (as to our sence) is so dreadful, is but a sun-shine compared to the wrath of God; as will appear if we consider it in two things.

First, it burns internally. The visible fire burns but visible things, outward things, but this fire burns within, scorches the conscience, burns the soul, burns that which all the fires in the world cannot reach, cannot touch. God is a Spirit, and the wrath of God is a fire that burnes the spirits, and will for ever afflict and torment the consciences of wicked men. The hottest fires which the most enraged malitious Persecuters kindle, cannot touch the spirit; the conscience is quiet, the soul triumphs while the flesh fries in the fire. 'Tis the fire of divine wrath alone which hath power upon the soul; and a burning there is ten thousand times more painful than the burning of our flesh.

Secondly, the wrath of God burns eternally. Your fires here though they are dreadful, yet they go out, they consume themselves by consuming the matter or fuel cast into them; they cannot continue alwayes, because they eat up and devour that which maintaines them: But the wrath of God burns continually. God is called a consuming fire, not because the fire of his wrath consumes, but because he consumeth sinners in the fire of wrath;

and when we ſay, he conſumeth ſinners in his wrath, or his wrath conſumeth ſinners, we are not to underſtand it of a conſumption as to *being*, but only as to a *well or comfortabe being*; for not only the ſoul, but the very bodies of ſinners ſhall remain in this fire of the wrath of God for ever unconſumed. The bodies of the damned ſhall be raiſed again at the great day, and being re-united to their ſouls, both ſhal abide unconſumed in the fire of this conſuming wrath eternally. The great dread of ordinary fire is, that it conſumes what it burns, but the greateſt dread of this fire is, that it conſumes not that which it burns. O therefore take heed of the wrath of God, the wrath of God is terrible as to corporal and temporal judgements, much more as to ſpirituall and eternal judgments; that is, as the fire of his wrath burns both internally and eternally. *Becauſe there is wrath, beware,*

Leſt he take thee away with his ſtroke.

Here the danger is expreſt. If the Lord be angry, he can ſoon take thee away with a ſtroke, he can remove, yea *hurry* thee away out of all thy preſent joys and enjoyments, to everlaſting ſorrows. The word imports a violent remove. The ſtroke here ſpoken of is like that *(Chap. 24. 26.)* He *ſtriketh them as wicked men, in the open ſight of others*; that is, he ſhames them as well as puniſheth them; as he ſtrikes them with his hand to their confuſion, ſo he ſtrikes or claps his own hands together in diriſion, as 'tis ſaid *(Chap. 27. 23.)* *Men ſhall clap their hands at him, and ſhall hiſs him out of his place*; we may take it in both theſe ſignifications; *Leſt he take thee away with a ſtroke*; that is, leſt he ſtrike thee ſo as to make an utter end of thee, or leſt he take thee away with deriſion, clapping his hands at thee, and pouring contempt upon thee. Have we not reaſon to beware of that wrath, which in either ſenſe can take us away with his ſtroke? Yet I conceive a third ſenſe may be given of theſe words, *Leſt he take thee away with his ſtroke*, that is, leſt he take thee away ſuddenly, even as ſuddenly as a ſtroke can be given.

נשפק
Cum complo-ſione.

Hence Note;

First, *God can preſently ſtrike to deſtruction,*

He can take the ſtrongeſt away with a ſtroke, he can do it with one ſtroke. The Lord needs not ſtand cutting and ſlaſhing, hacking

ing and hewing (as we ſay) all day long; one ſtroke of his will do it. He took away *Herod* at one ſtroke (*Acts* 12. 23.) He took away *Ananias* and *Saphira* at one ſtroke (*Acts* 5. 5.) *Nadab* and *Abihu* were taken away with one ſtroke (*Lev.* 10. 1.) All theſe periſhed, and ſo have thouſands more, as with a ſtroke, ſo ſuddenly, at one ſtroke. The Lord can ſtrike home; as *Abiſhai* ſaid to *David* in the caſe of *Saul*, when he found him in the Trench, *Let me ſtrike him at once, and I will not ſtrike him a ſecond time.* The Lord threatned (*Nah.* 1. 9.) to bring deſtruction upon thoſe at once, when he told them *Affliction ſhould not riſe a ſecond time*; as if he had ſaid, I will not ſtrike another blow at them, I'le hit them home, and do my work with one blow. We need not fear how many, or how mighty his enemies are, he can rid himſelf of them with one ſtroke. The Lord ſtrikes ſome to take away their ſin; thus he ſtrikes his own people: others he ſtrikes to take away their perſons; thus he ſtrikes the wicked, eſpecially thoſe who enemy-like, deſignedly ſtrike at Him, his Name, his Truth, his Glory. *Elihu* doth not ſay, *Beware leaſt he ſtrike thee*, but *leaſt he take thee away with a ſtroke.* The Lord often ſtrikes his own faithful ſervants, they receive many a ſtroke, many a laſh, many a blow, many a chaſtiſement at his hands, but he doth not take them away with a ſtroke, as he doth the wicked. The Lord ſtrikes his ſervants to take away their ſins, and he ſtrikes wicked men to take away their lives, to deſtroy them utterly.

Secondly, As the word ſignifieth taking away with clapping of the hands or with deriſion,

Note;

God will even laugh at the ruine of wicked men,

He will clap his hands at their fall. We read *(Prov.* 1. 26, 27.) how Wiſdome called and cried, and none would anſwer, all ſet her calls and counſels at naught; what followed? *I* (ſaid Wiſdome, that is, Chriſt) *will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh*; as much as is ſaid in the Text, I will take them away with a ſtroke, or with clapping my hands, with a kind of deriding *plaudite* at their going off, or rather at their being thruſt off the Stage of this world. They are in the moſt ſad condition, whom God not only deſtroys, but derides; they have moſt cauſe to mourn in their affliction, at whoſe affliction God laughs.

laughs. It is ſaid (*Job* 9.23.) *God will laugh at the tryal* of the innocent, and why, was ſhewed in opening that place; I only touch it now upon this occaſion: The Lord knows the innocent will come off with honour, will ſtand it out in their tryal bravely, he ſees what Courage & Faith & Patience they will manifeſt in and under their ſufferings. Now as the Lord even claps his hands, and laughs, when his choſen noble ones go forth to the tryal, knowing they will honour him in their tryal; ſo the Lord laughs at the deſtruction of the wicked, knowing that his Juſtice and Righteouſneſs ſhall have a full ſtroke at them, and lay both their ſhame and ſin open to all the world.

That the Lord in his wrath takes away with a ſtroke, ſhould make us all *beware*, fear and tremble; but that which followeth, may make us wary, fear and tremble much more; for, ſaith *Elihu* in the cloſe of the verſe,

Then a great Ranſome cannot deliver thee.

רב כפר *Redemptionis Pretium, quod* Λυτρὸν *Græci appellant.*

The word rendred *a Ranſome* ſignifies that which is paid as a price for the deliverance of a Captive out of bondage: Thus Chriſt gave himſelf a Ranſome for ſinners. But here is a Caſe wherein no Ranſome will be taken; no, though it be, not a ſmall, petty Ranſome, but a *great Ranſome*, or that (ſaith *Elihu*) it *cannot deliver thee*. As if he had ſaid, When once God is ſo far provoked, that the Decree is gone forth to deſtroy thee, then it will be in vain to think of getting off by Ranſome.

Here it may be queried, What is this great Ranſom that will not deliver? There is a twofold Ranſome, by one of which the people of God are ſometimes delivered, and alwayes by the other.

Firſt, The people of God are ſometimes ranſomed or delivered by the deſtruction and ruine of the wicked; that's their Ranſom, and that, not ſeldom, proves a great Ranſome. It is ſaid expreſly (Prov. 21. 18.) *The wicked ſhall be a Ranſome for the righteous*; how, a Ranſome for the righteous! will a wicked man pay a Ranſome for the righteous? or will the wicked man offer himſelf a Ranſome for him, and ſay, I'le dye inſtead of the righteous man? ſurely there's no ſuch thing to be expected from him. *Peradventure for a good man* (ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 5. 7, 8.) *one would even dare to dye*; that is, one good man may poſſibly be willing to lay down his life for another good man. *Scarcely for a*

a righteous man would one dye; that is, for a man, who only gives every man his due, or doth every man right: but for a good man, that is, for a man that hath been very kind and bountiful to others, ſome *would even dare to dye*; yet he that doth ſo, muſt be ſuppoſed to be a righteous and a good man himſelf. For it cannot be thought that a wicked man would give himſelf a Ranſome for the righteous, that he would dye for him whom he doth not love, yea, whom he uſually hates to the death. How then is it affirmed by *Solomon*, that the wicked ſhall be a Ranſome for the righteous? The meaning is, God will deſtroy the wicked, to ſave the righteous, or he will ſave the righteous, even through the blood and deſtruction of the wicked: In that ſence the wicked are many times a Ranſome for the righteous, rather than the righteous ſhall periſh, the Lord will deſtroy the wicked. Thus the Lord ſpake by his Prophet of old (*Iſa.* 43. 3.) *I gave Egypt for thy Ranſome, Ethiopia and Sheba for thee.* How was *Egypt* a Ranſome for *Iſrael*? had they any mind to deliver the people of God? no; but rather than God would not have *Iſrael* ſaved, he deſtroyed *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians* in the Red Sea. Thus the Lord makes the wicked a Ranſome for the righteous. Though *Egypt* were a very goodly Country, yet God deſtroyed it by ten Plagues, that he might deliver *Iſrael*. Though *Pharaoh* was a great Prince, he drowned him in the Sea, rather than his people ſhould go back into Captivity. *Solomon* gives us this ſenſe of the Prophets words fully in his own (*Prov.* 11. 8.) *The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his ſtead.*

Secondly, There is another, a more excellent Ranſome for the people of God, and that is *the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt*: *We are bought with a price*, dearly bought, and that's the Price with which we are bought (1 *Cor.* 6. 20.) that's a Ranſome which ſets ſinners free, and makes them free indeed (*Joh.* 8. 36.) free from ſin, and free unto righteouſneſs (*Math.* 20. 28.) *He gave himſelf a Ranſome for many*; for a great many, for all who believe and take hold of his Name. When *Elihu* ſaith, *A great Ranſome cannot deliver*, 'tis not to be underſtood of the Ranſome which Chriſt hath paid; that's a Ranſome ſo great, ſo precious, that it hath, and doth, and will for ever deliver the greateſt, the worſt of ſinners, who run to it from the wrath of God.

What then is the Ranſome that is invalid and uſeleſs, which will not be accepted, which cannot deliver? I

I anſwer, Firſt, in general; it is any thing on this ſide Chriſt, be it what it will. The greateſt Ranſome that men can deviſe or heap up together, or that men can make, whatſoever it is, beſides the Ranſome of Gods own appointment, will not deliver a ſinner when once wrath hath ſeized upon him.

I anſwer, Secondly, as to particulars: It is not, Firſt, Riches, no not Gold. Secondly, It is not our own prayers, no not tears. Thirdly, It is not our own good works, no not our own righteouſneſs. Fourthly, It is not any of the good works or righteouſneſs of any other, the holyeſt men on earth, no not the righteouſneſs of the Saints and holy Angels in Heaven, that can deliver us from the wrath of God. The firſt of theſe particulars *Elihu* gives for inſtance in the 19th verſe (of which I ſhall there ſpeak further) and we may underſtand this verſe of all the reſt. *Then a great Ranſome cannot deliver thee.*

Hence note;

There is nothing but the Blood of Chriſt can ranſome ſinners from the wrath of God, nor will that deliver ſome ſinners.

(I ſuppoſe *Elihu* might have reſpect to that, in urging *Job* to humble himſelf and repent) There are Caſes, wherein even the Blood of Chriſt will not deliver; though that hath an intrinſecal vertue, power, and value, to deliver any ſinner, yet, I ſay, there are Caſes, wherein even that great Ranſome, the Blood of Chriſt, will not deliver ſinners; or thus, there are many ſinners in ſuch a Caſe, that Chriſt will not ranſome them by his Blood. But who are they?

Firſt, All that are impenitent, and perſiſt obſtinately in their ſins. If any man reſolve to go on in ſin, the Blood of Chriſt is no Ranſome for him. Jeſus Chriſt came to ſave us from our ſins, not to ſave us in our ſins.

Secondly, All that are unbelievers; though they have a great meaſure of ſorrow (ſuch as it is) for ſin, yea, ſuppoſe they have left off the outward practiſe of thoſe ſins, for which they have ſorrowed, yet if they do not lay hold on Chriſt by faith, his Blood is no Ranſome for them. As Chriſt will not ſave preſumptuous ſinners, who believe without repenting, ſo neither will he ſave incredulous ſinners, who repent without believing. Thirdly, That great price of the Blood of Chriſt is not a Ranſome for apoſtatizing

ing ſinners, who having pretended to Repentance, and made profeſſion of faith, yet go back from Chriſt and his wayes, at once building what they ſeemed to have deſtroyed by repentance, and deſtroying what they ſeem'd to be built up in by faith. The Apoſtle declares the doom of all ſuch (*Heb.* 10. 26.) *For if we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more Sacrifice for ſin.* Wilful ſinners againſt received Light caſt off the Sacrifice of Chriſt (which is our Ranſome, and) with which they ſeemed to cloſe; and having caſt that off, God will never be at the coſt to provide them another Sacrifice: *There remains* (ſaith the Text) *no more Sacrifice for ſin.* They would have no more to do with that Sacrifice for ſin (that's the caſe of thoſe who ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt) and there is no other Sacrifice for them. Such Apoſtates *crucifie to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and* (by their being aſhamed of him, and turning from him, as much as in them lyes) *put him to open ſhame*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks (*Heb.* 6. 6.) but God will never crucifie his Son afreſh, nor put him again to open ſhame, for the ranſoming of wilful Apoſtates. It is the ground of our hope, that God once gave up his Son to be crucified for us, but they are of all men moſt hopeleſs, who crucifie to themſelves the Son of God afreſh. The Son of God, Jeſus Chriſt, will not ſave *thoſe that tread him under foot*, nor ſhall *the Blood of the Covenant* be a Ranſom for *thoſe who count it an unholy thing*; as 'tis ſaid at the 29th verſe. They who refuſe the Goſpel, that is, Goſpel-Grace, ſhall never have any benefit by the Goſpel; theſe Apoſtates do not only refuſe to chuſe the Grace of the Goſpel, but refuſe it after a ſeeming choyce of it, and are therefore ſaid in the cloſe of that verſe, *to have done deſpite to the Spirit of Grace*; and ſhall they who deſpiſe, and, which is more, do deſpite to the Spirit of Grace, be ranſom'd through Grace? Thus we ſee, that as nothing but the Blood of Chriſt can be a Ranſome, ſo ſome ſhall have no ſhare in, nor benefit by that great Ranſome. They who repent not, they who believe not, they who ſin wilfully after a profeſſion made, both of Faith and Repentance, can have no deliverance by that *great Ranſome, the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt.*

Elihu having told *Job* in General, that if he provoked God to wrath, then a great ranſome could not deliver him, proceeds to give him one particular inſtance of what cannot; and he gives it

in that which is the moſt uſual ranſome, and which hath ranſomed thouſands from the wrath of man, that is, *riches, gold.*

Verſ. 19. *Will he eſteem thy riches? no, not gold, nor all the forces of ſtrength.*

As if he had ſaid, Poſſibly, O *Job*, thou having been a great man, a rich man, the richeſt the greateſt man in all the Eaſt, mayſt think thou couldſt buy off thy offence with gold, and get out from under his wrath by thy wealth and riches; but ſuppoſe thou wert as great and rich as ever, or greater and richer than any are, or ever were,

Will he eſteem thy riches?

ערך *ordinavit; & quia res æſtimandæ ordinantur aliæ juxta alias, ideo pro æſtimare ſumitur.* Merc:

The word rendred *eſteem*, ſignifies to put in order, becauſe things which are of eſteem and value, are laid up handſomely and orderly. As no man eſteems traſh, ſo he will not lay it up among his treaſures. *Will he eſteem, or lay up thy riches*, as ſome precious thing, as his treaſure; ſurely no. The queſtion (as frequently in Scripture) is a ſtrong denial; will he? he will not value thy riches, no more than a ruſh; what doſt tell him of thy riches, he makes no account of all that thou haſt to give, yea, though thou hadſt all the world to give: Men will eſteem thy riches, money anſwers all things among men, but alaſs, it will anſwer nothing with God, *will he eſteem*

Thy riches?

Some tranſlate the word which we render *riches*, by *nobleneſs* or *greatneſs*; ſo Mr *Broughton*, *Will he eſteem thy nobleneſs?* The word ſignifies both, and *Job* was both, he was a great man, and a Nobleman, the chief Magiſtrate, a Prince among the people where he dwelt, as appears fully in the 29th Chapter. *Will he eſteem either thy riches, or thy nobleneſs?* ſhalt thou be accepted becauſe thou art a great Lord, a mighty man, doſt thou think the Lord will eſteem thee for this? Certainly no. We may take in both ſenſes of the word, *Will he eſteem thy riches, or Nobleneſs?*

Hence note, Firſt;

Greatneſs without goodneſs, is of little or no eſteem with God.

Note,

Note, Secondly;

God will not be taken off by any outward reſpect whatſoever, from bringing vengeance upon evil men.

God will not be ſtopt in his courſe of Juſtice with riches or great titles, with honour, or nobleneſs: The riches of one man cannot ranſome another, (*Pſal.* 49. 7, 8, 9.) *They that truſt in their wealth, and boaſt themſelves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ranſome for him.* Nor can any mans riches ranſome himſelf, (*Pro.* 10. 2.) *Treaſures of wickedneſs* (that is, treaſures gotten wickedly) *profit nothing.* Nor will the treaſures of the wicked (though well gotten) profit them, (*Pro.* 11. 4.) *Riches availe not in the day of wrath*, (Zeph. 1. 7.) *Their gold and ſilver ſhall not profit them in the day of my wrath.* If you preſent your ſelves before God with titles of honour, and bags of gold, neither the one nor the other will do it, he will not regard thy riches, nor nobleneſs. When *Iſhmael* came treacherouſly upon thoſe *Jewes*, ten of them ſaid, *Slay us not*, (Jer. 4. 8.) *for we have great treaſures in the field, of Wheat, and of Barly, and Oile, and of Wine; ſo he forbare, and ſlew them not among their brethren.* But this will not do in the day of the Lords anger.

Will he eſteem thy riches?

שוע *clamavit. Septuaginta id in mente habuiſſe videntur, nam vertunt δεήσεως* שוע *opulentus dives* (Iſa: 32. 5.) שוע *per ſcurec ſignificat opes, cap.* 30. 24. *cap.* 34. 20. *Non eſtimabit clamorem tuum, nihil ducit quantumvis clames, non eo movebitur, ſed pro divitiis malo.* Merc:

Some tranſlate thus, *Will he regard thy crying or clamor?* As if *Elihu* had ſaid, *Cry as much as thou wilt, the Lord will not regard it.* This goes higher. Many poſſibly will not be taken off from the proceſs of Juſtice, by greatneſs or riches, who yet by our humble ſupplication and cry may be taken off; *But will the Lord regard thy cry?* or as the Septuagint read it, *Will he have regard to thy prayer?* Wicked men that have rejected the Lords commands, will yet hope, or rather preſume, the Lord will hear their cry, and therefore they will be at their prayers in times of trouble, when the wrath of God breaks out; this is their laſt reſort and refuge. They who never made the Lord their choyce in good times, will yet make him their refuge in evil times, or in dayes of trouble; they think ſurely to be ſheltered, and ſaved, and ſpared, when they pray: but this will not do neither; *Will he eſteem thy prayers?* The Hebrew Text, at leaſt, allows, if not clearly holds

out

out this reading, and it can be no hurt to take in as much profitable ſenſe, as the words, without undue ſtraining, may hold out to us. So then, when the Lords wrath appears, neither riches, nor honour, nor prayers, nor teares can give ſinners any relief. The cryes and prayers of the wicked are no more regarded by God, than their riches or greatneſs. *Then they ſhall call upon me,* (ſaith *Wiſdome*, Pro. 1. 28.) that is, *When their feare cometh as deſolation, and their deſtruction cometh as a Whirlewind, when diſtreſs and anguiſh cometh upon them,* (v. 27.) when 'tis thus with them, *then they ſhall call upon me, but I will not anſwer*; that is, I will not eſteem their cry. That's a very remarkable Scripture, (*Pſal.* 18. 41.) where *David* ſpeaking of his enemies, how the Lord had given him their necks, and a power to deſtroy them that hated him, preſently adds, *They cryed, but there was none to ſave them,* (but it may be they cryed where they ſhould not for help; no, ſaith the Text, *they cryed*) *even to the Lord, but he anſwered them not: then did I beat them as ſmall as the duſt before the wind,* &c. The Lord having declared how reſolv'd he was to proceed in a way of wrath againſt the *Jewiſh* Nation, adds (*Jer.* 14. 12.) *When they faſt I will not hear their cry.* That people had been very obſtinate and rebellious, they had withſtood the call of God by the Prophet; yet when they ſaw wrath appearing and approaching, then they betook themſelves to faſting and prayer; but ſaith the Lord, it ſhall not advantage them, though they faſt and in their faſting cry, yet I will not regard them, nor be entreated: I know they will be praying to me, but I will take no notice of them. See how dreadfull a thing it is to refuſe the offers and tenders of grace, to go on in a way of ſin; for then, no ranſome will do it, riches and honours, yea prayers and cryes and teares, ſhall not be regarded. *Will he eſteem thy riches?*

No not gold.

This is to be joyned (according to our tranſlation) with the former words, and it ſuits fully with our tranſlation of theſe words; Gold being the beſt of worldly riches, and having the greateſt power with and command over men; yet ſaith *Elihu*, *Will he eſteem thy riches, no not Gold.* He mentions that, becauſe (I ſay) it is the choiceſt part of riches, the worſt ſort of gold is of higher eſteem and worth, than any other mettal; Gold beares the greateſt

teſt price among metals, and hath the greateſt prevalency among men, but none with God. The word rendred *Gold*, ſignifies *defending*, but gold is no defence againſt God. *Will he eſteem thy riches? no not Gold.* The note is the ſame in ſubſtance with the former.

The Lord regards not men for their riches, no not for the beſt of riches.

Not only will he not eſteem your Copper, and Braſſe, and Iron and Tynn, but not your Gold, (1 *Pet.* 1. 18.) Gold doth much with men, but nothing with God. I ſhall not ſtay upon this clauſe, it being only an hightning of the ſame thing before aſſerted. But

There are two other readings of the latter part of this verſe, upon which I ſhall ſtay a little: Firſt, thus;

Will he eſteem thy riches? no not in affliction.

The word which we render as one, ſignifying *the beſt gold, refined gold*, other interpreters render as two words, which ſignifie to be perplexed or in ſtreights; *Will he eſteem thy riches? no though thou art in the greateſt ſtreights, and knoweſt not what to do.*

Na quidem in anguſtia בְּצַר *ego nomen* בְּצַר *verto in angueſtia; alii reddunt in ſignificatione ſua ſtri, in participio* בֹּצֵר, *cap.* 22. 24. *ſed ibi ſcribitur* בְּצַר *in accentu diſtinguente pro* בְּצַר Piſc:

Hence Note;

The Lord will not regard rich wicked men, when they are in ſtreights.

The Lord who eſteems not the wicked rich at any time, will leſt eſteem them in an evil time. The Lord who hath an eſteem of, and a regard to the godly at all times, hath it eſpecially in a time of ſtreights and trouble. But as the Lord never regards wicked men, ſo then leſt when they have moſt need of it. Will he eſteem them? *no not in affliction.*

There is a third reading of theſe words: *Will he eſteem thy riches? no not any defence.* As our tranſlation, *no not gold*, falls in plainly with the firſt words of the Text; ſo this with the latter. *Will he eſteem thy riches, no not gold*, ſay we, anſwering the word *riches* in the firſt part of the verſe. *Will he eſteem thy riches? no not defence*, ſay others, which anſwers thoſe words, *nor all the forces of ſtrength*, in the latter part of the verſe. So then, as our reading complyes with the former part of the verſe, ſo this hath as faire a com-

בָּצַר *in piel, contra rapinas munivit, hinc* בָּצַר *aurum leſtiſſimum, quaſi ab igne munitum aut quod ſit boni-ſimi munimentum.*

compliance with the latter; *No not any defence.* The word ſignifies *to fortify*, to fence, to make ſtrong, and hence, *gold*, becauſe gold is mans ſtrength and defence. Riches are a great ſtrength; to be rich in gold is a mans ſtrong tower. *Will he eſteem thy riches? no, not gold, or defence,*

Nor all the forces of ſtrength.

Theſe words, in the cloſe of the verſe, being the ſame with the middle part, as laſt rendred, may very well be drawn up into one, and conceived of, as if *Elihu* had ſaid, *Suppoſe thou art a mighty man and haſt ſtrong forces, he will not eſteem thee for all that*; *The very weakneſs of God is ſtronger than man* (1 *Cor.* 1. 25.) that is, than the ſtrongeſt man, or than any ſtrength which man can procure, either to oppoſe God, or to protect himſelf againſt him. The Prophet to ſhew the great power of the *Chaldeans*, ſaith (*Hab.* 1. 10.) *They ſhall ſcoff at kings, and deride every ſtrong hold.* Surely the Lord is ſo far from eſteeming the defences and forces of ſtrength, which men make to, and for themſelves, that he ſcoffs at and derides them. The Lord will deride all the ſtrong holds of man, even the forces of ſtrength. Some get internal carnal ſtrong holds, to fortifie themſelves in, of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks (2 *Cor.* 10. 4.) *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the caſting down of ſtrong holds.* Moſt ſinners are men of wit, they provide themſelves ſtrong holds to ſave their ſins in, they have their excuſes and reaſonings to defend their ſins or themſelves in their ſins by. Others are men of might, they get external ſtrong holds, they have Armies and Cities of defence, to ſecure themſelves by; but *will the Lord regard either?* Not the ſtrong holds, ſet up and maintained by force of wit, *no, nor all the forces of ſtrength.* Though thou haſt Army upon Army, and City upon City, though thou doſt add Caſtle to Caſtle, and Fort to Fort, they are no more than paper walls before the Lord. As neither riches nor nobleneſs, ſo no power of man can ſecure man from the hand of God. Mr. *Broughton* varieth a little from our reading, yet concurrs fully in ſenſe; *No gold, nor any other thing ſhould be able to give ſound ſtrength*; which himſelf expounds by this ſhort gloſs. *If now thou deſpiſeſt repentance, thou ſhalt be utterly caſt off.* As if he had ſaid to *Job*, it is not thy, or any mans ſtanding out againſt God, that

that will help you, your only help is in repentance and ſelf-humbling before God. *Will he eſteem thy riches? no, not gold, nor all the forces of ſtrength.*

Hence note;

There is no ſtrength againſt the Lord.

As *there is no counſel, ſo no force of ſtrength againſt the Lord.* *Hannah* ſang this truth (1 *Sam.* 2. 9.) *By ſtrength ſhall no man prevail*, that is, againſt man, if God be with him; much more is it true that by ſtrength ſhall no man prevail againſt God (*Iſa.* 1. 31.) *The ſtrong ſhall be tow, and the maker thereof as a ſpark*; that is, as ſome expound, their Idols, whom they made their ſtrength, ſhall be as tow, that is, as the moſt combuſtible matter, eaſily conſumed, *and the maker of it*, that is, the Idol-maker, ſhall be *as a ſpark*. Do but blow a ſpark among tow, and what will become of it? Such are the ſtrongeſt Idols, in which men truſt, and ſuch are the mightyeſt and ſtrongeſt men before the Lord, who truſt in them. Tow or flax or hemp (after the dreſſing) is as tinder, that the leaſt ſpark will give fire to The ſtrong (Idol) ſhall be as tow, and the maker of it as a ſpark; or, which is in effect the ſame, *The ſtrong* (man) *ſhall be tow, and that which he hath made*, or (as we put in the Margin) *his work*, that is, his Idol, *ſhall be as a ſpark*, and they ſhall both burn, or periſh together. This is the ſentence of the Lord againſt the ſtrong, a ſpark ſhall ſet them on fire and burn them; how then ſhall the ſtrong be able to ſtand before the Lord who is not a ſpark, but a fire, and that a conſuming fire! and therefore, I may urge *Elihu's* counſel to *Job*, upon all ſorts of men, upon thoſe eſpecially who perſiſt in any ſin, take heed, *becauſe there is wrath, beware, &c.* or I may urge them with the Prophets dehortation (*Jer.* 9. 23.) *Let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdome, nor the mighty man in his ſtrength, nor the rich man in his riches*, for, none of theſe can help or deliver from wrath, only Jeſus Chriſt can, and it hath been ſhewed who they are to whom he will not be a delivering ranſome. It may be very uſeful to conſider what negatives *Elihu* puts upon ſinners as to deliverance from kindled wrath; not riches, not honour, not crying, not praying, not ſtrength, not defence can deliver without turning from ſin to God, and all in Chriſt.

Elihu

Elihu having urged two arguments to make *Job* beware of wrath, first, because nothing could ransom him, God regards not riches, no not gold; secondly, because nothing could rescue him, all the *forces of strength* could not defend him against, nor fetch him out from under the hand of God; *Elihu* (I say) having dispatched these two arguments, he in the 20th *verse* gives a further, and that a third argument to move *Job* to take heed of wrath, because, as he could neither be ransomed nor rescued, so neither could he be hid or sheltred from the wrath of God. That is the general sense of the next verse.

Vers. 20. *Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.*

The root of that word which we render *desire*, signifies a very earnest breathing and longing after a thing, as conceiving and believing the enjoyment thereof would be an exceeding comfort and refreshment to us. So 'tis used in the seventh Chapter of this book at the second verse; *as the servant earnestly desireth the shadow*, &c. When a labourer is hot and sweltered almost (as we say) at his work in the Sun, how earnestly doth he desire the shadow! We say (in the Margine of that place) *he gapeth after the shadow*. A man, when he is hot, gapes to suck in fresh air. Such an intendment and force there is in this word, *desire not*, long not for, gape not after

ענה *significat respirare, anhelare, ad aliquid vel rei alicujus summo desiderio teneri.* Merc.

the night,

The night seems not to be a thing, or a season so desireable, that we should gape for it or long after it. *Solomon* saith (*Eccl.* 11.7.) *Surely light is pleasant, and it is a comfortable thing for the eyes to behold the Sun*; but who hath a desire after the night? what is the beauty or comelinesse of the night that any should so much desire it? why then doth *Elihu* here forbid *Job* (as supposing he did) to desire it? *desire not the night.*

I answer, the night may be taken two wayes, or under a twofold notion. First properly, as that which casteth a vail or mantle of darkness over both persons and things, and covers them from our sight; in allusion to which, the sense is this; Do not hope to hide or conceal thy self from the eye or knowledge of God. As thou canst not be ransomed, as thou canst not be rescued from his

his power (which was shewed before) so desire not the night, for thou canst not be obscured from his knowledge under the covert of it, there is no hiding from God. Though I judge that interpretation too gross, which supposeth *Elihu* counselling *Job* not to desire the night, as robbers and adulterers, to cover him while doing wickedly, yet possibly he might think *Job* was not so free to confess the evils which he had done, and therefore rather desired the concealment of them.

Secondly, the night in Scripture, as also in humane Authors, is put improperly for death. All the dead are wrapt up in a night of darkness. Hence that counsel (*John* 9.4.) *Work while you have the day, the night cometh when no man can work.* We may work, yea, much work is done in the natural night. It is said of the vertuous woman (*Prov.* 31.18.) *Her candle goes not out by night*; she and her maids are at work in the night; therefore it cannot be strictly meant, that no man can work in the night. The night there is the night of death, or of an extream troublous life; in these nights, especially in the former, no man can work, for there *is no wisdom, nor device, nor labour in the grave whether we are going*, (*Eccl.* 9.10.) According to this Scripture interpretation, *desire not the night*, is desire not death. *Job* had put forth such desires more than once (*Chap.* 7.15.) *My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life.* Mr. *Broughton* translates, *Breath not unto that night; for peoples passage to their place*: That is, (saith he) *desire not death, the common passage of all men, as thou hast done.* Therefore *Elihu* seems here to call *Job* off from those desires; do not thou peevishly or impatiently (because of the trouble of thy life) call for death, lest it come too soon, and it do by thee as it hath done by many others, whom it hath cut off in judgment. So it follows here, *Desire not the night*,

Ne aspires ad illam noctem (sc. mortis) *qua abeunt populi ad locum suum.* Jun. *Qua e medio tolluntur populi in loco ipsorum.* Pisc.

when people are cut off in their place.

Death is a cutting off. As many die in the night, so when-ever any die they are cut off from this world, and all the imployments of it, they are cut off from their dearest friends and relations. Death cuts off the thread of life, and us from the comforts of this life.

The Hebrew is, *when people ascend.* The Original Scripture expresseth *dying by ascending*, though the death of the wicked is rather

Verbum עלה *ascendere pro excidi & tolli usurpatur.*

ther a *descending*. It is said by a late Writer concerning the heathen profane and wicked Emperors of *Rome*, *Such a one descended* (that is, died) *in such a year of his abomination*. Now though the wicked descend when they die, yet there is a sence also wherein all men may be said to ascend when they die; and there is no doubt but the godly, as to their more noble part, ascend to God when they die. Thus the word is used in the fifth Chapter of this Book, at the 16th verse, where *Eliphaz* speaking of the death of a godly man, saith to *Job*, *Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh* (or *ascendeth*) *in his season*. *David* deprecated an immature death under this Metaphor (*Psal.* 102. 14.) *Take me not away in the midst of mine age*. The word is, *let me not ascend in the midst of mine age*, that is, before I have measured the usual course of life. Thus to *ascend*, is the same with to be *cut off*; death cuts off the best from this world, and then they ascend to a better. This sense of the words suits well with the latter exposition of the *night*, as taken for the night of death. The word *ascend*, is conceived to have in it a double allusion; first, to corn which is taken up by the hand of the reaper, and then laid down on the stubble. Secondly, unto the light of a candle, which as the candle spends, or as that which is the food of the fire is spending, ascends, and at last goes out and vanisheth.

Translatio a candelis, quarum lumen ascendit, atque ita paulatim consumuntur ipsa.

There is yet a further sense of the whole verse thus; *Desire not the night*, &c. That is, do not curiously enquire the cause of that divine judgement by which God sometimes sweeps away whole nations, good and bad together, in the night, or suddenly. Or thus, disquiet not thy mind in the night, but rather rest in the will of God, when thou seest or hearest of those great destructions which come upon persons or nations. *Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place*, that is, when they die in, or are removed from the place where they formerly lived and had their abode; in which sense it is said of the dead, *their place shall know them no more* (*Psal.* 103. 16.) How well soever any are settled, death cuts them *off in their place*.

תחת *Sub, subter sæpe significat, in loco.*

First, Forasmuch as *Elihu* speaking to *Job* in this distressed estate, wishes him *not to desire the night*,

Observe;

Observe;

In times of distress and trouble we are apt to make many strange wishes, or to express uncouth requests and desires.

The Prophet *Jeremiah* quits himself from this in one point (*chap.* 17. 16.) *I have not desired the woful day* (*Lord*) *thou knowest*. He was so far from desiring it, that he prayed for the peace and prosperity of that people; but though *Jeremy* did not desire the evil day to come on others, yet when the evil day was come upon himself we find him venting strange and strong desires of that kind (*Chap.* 9. 2.) *O that my head were a fountain, and mine eyes rivers of tears, that I might weep night and day for the slain of the daughter of my People*. He had visions of slaughter, and he did even beg a head melted into water for abundant mourning over that day. But what were his other, what were his further wishes, with respect to himself at that time? we have them in the next verse. *O that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of a wayfaring man, that I might leave my people, and go from them, for they be all adulterers, a company of treacherous men*. What uncomfortable desires had *Jeremiah* as to that day of distress! O how did he covet to have a retiring place, any hole in the wilderness, like a wayfaring man, that he might leave his people and see them no more, because they were so wicked, and their wickedness he foresaw would bring down such dreadful evils upon them. And as he wisht this sad retirement upon the foresight of evils to come, so we find him in another place (*Chap.* 20. 14, 15, 16, &c.) wishing that he had never been born to see such present evils. We have the like plain wish of *David*, in the day of his trouble (*Psal.* 55. 2.) *Attend unto me* (*O God*) *and hear me, I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise; because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me* (*they charged him with evils that he had not done*) *my heart is sore pained within me, the terrors of death are fallen upon me, fearfulness and trouble are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed*, or *covered me*. *David* was at that time in a very sad day, you see; and what was his wish that day? we have it at the 6th verse, *And I said, O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest; lo then would I wander*

far off and remain in the wilderneſs. Holy *David* could not keep his heart (in thoſe diſtreſſes) from extravagant wiſhes. *David* had the integrity of a dove (as he often pleaded before the Lord) and being diſtreſt, he wiſhed alſo for the wings of a dove, that he might flee away, and get out of the reach of all thoſe impendent calamities. How uſual is it for good men in bad dayes to breath out ſuch wiſhes? one wiſhes that he had never been born, rather than to ſee ſuch a day; another wiſhes he may die preſently, rather than live in ſuch a day. When the Apoſtle *John* had given the propheſie of dreadful judgments to come upon the wicked world, or the world of wicked men, he preſently tells us what their wiſhes or deſires will be (*Rev.* 9. 6.) *And in thoſe dayes ſhall men ſeek death, and ſhall not find it, and ſhall deſire to die, and death ſhall flee from them.* Moſt men flee death, that's a miſery; but death fleeth from ſome men, and that's a greater miſery. They are in the worſt of conditions who would have death when death will not be had. Their lives are worſe than death who only wiſh to die. What non-ſenſe wiſhes and deſires had they alſo in the day of the Lords anger, mentioned in the ſame book (*Chap.* 6. 16.) Who *ſaid to the mountaines and to the rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.* It is poſſible for good men ſometimes to have ſtrange wiſhes; but O how lamentable are the wiſhes of wicked men and unbelievers, who have no part nor intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, in thoſe times when Conſcience is wounded and awakened, or when a day of the Lords wrath, or judgment from the Lord appeareth! When Chriſt the Lamb ſhall ſit upon the throne, and call them to give an account, O then they will wiſh for rocks and mountaines to fall upon them, that they might not appear; how glad will they then be to be hidden with an everlaſting night! They cannot but *deſire the night, who have ſinned againſt light*. Holy *Job* could not forbear to deſire the night of death in the day of his diſtreſs; what deſires then muſt the wicked have, who have no hope beyond this life!

Again, as to the vanity of that deſign of ſome in deſiring the night for ſhelter,

Note;

There is nothing can cover us from the eye, or ſecure us from the hand of God.

What

What is darkneſs to God, *who is light, and in whom there is no darkneſs at all* (1 John 1. 5.) *Deſire not the night*. As gold and ſilver cannot ranſom ſinners, as great forces, (all the Armies on earth) forces of ſtrength cannot help ſinners, ſo the night cannot hide them; they that are in the groſſeſt darkneſs, are never the more out of Gods ſight; *The darkneſs is not darkneſs to him, the darkneſs and the light to him are both alike* (Pſal. 139. 11, 12.) and therefore he laid before (*verſ.* 7.) *Whither ſhall I go from thy ſpirit? or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence? If I aſcend up to heaven thou art there*, &c. Whereſoever we are, God is, who is every where; nothing can keep us off from, or keep us out of the eye of God.

Laſtly, as *the night*, is taken for death; *Deſire not the night*,

Hence note;

It is a vain wiſh to deſire death for our reſcue, or eſcape from the evils of this life.

Death is it ſelf an evil, the worſt of natural evils. How can that help us out of our evils of trouble, which is it ſelf the moſt troubleſom evil? The Lord promiſeth ſome of his people that they ſhould die before the evil day; *Joſiah* and *Hezekiah* had ſuch promiſes: 'Tis a favour to die (as they did) in the aſſurance of eternal life, before we feel the evils of this life. But death, conſidered in it ſelf, is no relief againſt evil; and as it is the worſt of natural evils in it ſelf, ſo it carrieth thoſe who are unprepared and unprovided for it, to worſer evils than any they can meet with in this life. Some deſire death to eſcape the evils of this life, when, as ſoon as they die, they go to the evils of another life, which are the *ſecond death*, ſuch a death as hath *no ſecond*, and deſcend not only to the grave, but to hell. And what hath any one got by leaving the troubles of this life, to fall into the dolors of that ſecond ſecondleſs death! They only dream of ſecurity by death, who are unprepared to die. Death is good for none but thoſe who are fitted for, and have by faith laid hold upon eternal life.

JOB, Chap. 36. Verſ. 21.

Verſe. 21. *Take heed, regard not iniquity, for this thou haſt choſen rather than affliction.*

IN this verſe *Elihu* gives *Job* another ſerious admonition, or re-enforceth the former, warning him to take heed of ſpeaking or uttering any thing raſhly, unduely, or unbecomingly of God, in reſpect of his troubles and ſufferings; and this he urgeth upon him by two ſorts of arguments, as will appear when I come to handle the two following verſes.

שמר *Cuſtodivit, ſervavit.*

Take heed, regard not iniquity. As if he had ſaid, *beware, be well adviſed what thou doſt, and what thou ſayeſt.* The word which we here render *take heed*, ſignifies to keep and preſerve, but moſt properly, to prevent and keep off any evil, that it fall not upon us. The noun, from this root, ſignifies *a watch tower*, upon which a perſon ſtands to obſerve and give warning of any danger, or to deſcry any approaching enemy. 'Tis tranſlated, *take heed*, as here, ſo (1 *Kings.* 2. 4.) where *David* upon his death-bed, gives counſel to *Solomon* his ſon and ſucceſſor what to do, and how to walk in the way of the Lord, that (ſaith he) *the Lord may continue his word which he ſpake concerning me, ſaying, if thy children take heed to their wayes*, that is, if they are very watchful over their wayes, both as to their perſonal and princely walkings, if they walk in my ſtatutes, then I will do thus and thus for them. Thus ſaith *Elihu*, *take heed, look about you*, have your eyes in your head, be careful. Theſe *take heeds* are frequent in Scripture. From whence (before I come to the matter about which *Elihu* would have *Job* take heed.)

Obſerve;

It is our duty to be heedful.

We cannot be dutiful unleſs we are heedful; a headleſs perſon cannot be a faultleſs perſon. This duty runs quite through all we have to do; *take heed*, firſt, to the inward motions of the ſoul, take heed how & what you think (*Pro.* 4. 23.) *keep thy heart with all diligence (with all keepings, with all heedings*, it is this word in the text) heed

heed thy heart, that is, thy firſt ſtirrings and motions unto any work. Secondly, take heed, as to the firſt motions of the ſoul, ſo to the affections of the ſoul, which are ſoul-motions formed up and ſtated; take heed of your affections, how and what you deſire, how and what you love, how and what you hate. Thirdly, take heed to the tongue, how you ſpeak, and what you ſpeak, where you ſpeak, and why or for what ends you ſpeak; there is a great deal of *take heed* belonging to the tongue. Fourthly, take heed to the ear, when ye hear others ſpeak, take heed how you hear, and when ye hear, and what you hear; infection may ſoon come in at thoſe ports. Fifthly, take heed to the eyes, what you behold; the eyes are windowes which often let in vanity, yea, I may ſay, venome and poyſon into the ſoul. In a word, take heed of all your actions, or of your whole converſation; take heed what you do, and how you do it; ſee that ye walk circumſpectly, take heed in and about all theſe things, that ye ſin not, eſpecially, that ye neither have, nor carry on any deſign or work that is ſinful; take heed that ye be not found falling into that errour, to avoyd which, *Elihu* calleth or awakeneth *Job* to this watchfulneſs, *take heed.*

אל־תפן *A verbo* פנה *quod ſæpe animi intentionem, vel contemplationem valet ad aliquem finem, utpote ad miſerandum, vel interrogandum, vel adjudicandum.* Bold.

Regard not iniquity.

Here is the ſpecial matter in the text, about which *Elihu* adviſes *Job* to be heedful, *regard not iniquity.* The word rendred *regard*, ſignifies the turning of the face to look upon any object; that which we much regard, we turn about to look upon it, as that which we ſlight, we turn away from it and will not look upon it; we turn our face to a perſon or thing, ſignifying our approbation, and we turn away our face to ſhew our diſlike; and therefore we do well expreſs this word, which ſignifies *to turn the face, by regarding*; *turn not thy face to iniquity*, look not to it, give it not any reſpect or countenance, *regard not*

און *Iniquitas, vanitas.*

ἄτοπα. *Abſurda, indecentia.* Sept.

Iniquity.

The word ſignifies *vanity* properly. All iniquity is vanity, ſin is vanity, and ſin hath brought vanity into the whole creation, yea ſin makes all things a vexation to us. The *Chaldee* ſaith, *regard not a lie*, the Septuagint, *regard not things abſurd or uncomly.*

But what Iniquity doth *Elihu* here chiefly intend? I anſwer,

In

It is a triſth of Iniquity in general, regard not any iniquity; yet here *Elihu* ſpeaks not in that compaſs; as if he ſhould ſay, regard not robbery, regard not murder, regard not adultery and wantonneſs, regard not any of theſe foul and groſs ſins; but there was a ſpecial ſin which *Elihu* had an aym at, and which he thought *Job* gave too much regard unto; *regard not iniquity*, that is, undue ſpeeches and heart-gudgings, or impatient complainings againſt the proceedings of God with thee; that is, do not ſtand ſo much complaining about what thou ſuffereſt, and juſtifying thy ſelf in what thou haſt done, expoſtulate the matter no more with God, with not for the night of death, *&c.* This *is to regard or turn thy face to iniquity*; take heed of theſe things, do not regard theſe evils, this kind of iniquity.

Further, when *Elihu* ſaith *regard not iniquity*, we are to expound him by theſe affirmatives; *ſlight it, turn from it, abhor it, loath it, deſpiſe it, reject it*; all theſe affirmatives are contained in that negative, *regard not*. Frequently in Scripture, negatives intend their contrary affirmatives. When that Scripture ſaith, *deſpiſe not propheſying*, (1 *Theſ.* 5.) the meaning is, *ye ſhall regard it*, love it, follow it, delight in it; ſo on the other hand, when this Scripture ſaith, *regard not iniquity*, the meaning is, *deſpiſe* and oppoſe iniquity to the utmoſt; *Take heed, regard not iniquity*. From this part of the verſe thus opened,

Obſerve, Firſt;

It is no eaſie matter to keep our ſelves right when things ſeem to go wrong with us.

It is a hard thing to forbear iniquity when we are pinched with adverſity; not to ſpeak unduely and uncomly, not to ſpeak amiſs of God, not to ſpeak unbecoming our ſelves, require great caution in a day of diſtreſs. We have need to take heed of this iniquity, to be watchful in an evil day, that we neither do nor ſay that which is evil. *When things are amiſs with us, we are very apt to ſpeak and do amiſs.* As ſoon as ever the hand of God toucheth us, how do we grieve! how do we complain! how do we murmur! how do we repine! O regard not this, 'tis an iniquity to be taken heed of, in a dark day, in a day of trouble, ſuch as was upon *Job*; as black a day was upon him, as ever upon any in the world, as to his perſonal condition. If ſuch a Cedar failed, have not

not we, poor Shrubs, reaſon to look about in ſuch a day? When an affliction is very great, they that are for reputation great and ſtrong in faith, very choice believers, experienced ſouldiers in the wars of Jeſus Chriſt (when an affliction (I ſay) growes very great) how apt are they to be diſmayed, to be out of heart, to deſpond, to look upon themſelves as undone, and all undone! O regard not, turn from this iniquity. It ſhould not ſatisfie any ſervant of God that he avoids groſs iniquities in practiſe, he muſt make conſcience of an impatient word, and order his ſpeech aright under the rod, as well as his converſation.

Secondly, Foraſmuch as *Elihu* calls this an iniquity,

Obſerve;

Impatient ſpeeches render us guilty, let our afflictions and troubles be never ſo great.

Jobs affliction was as heavy as the ſand, yet *Elihu* tells him, your complainings are your iniquity. I have had occaſion ſeveral times in this book to ſpeak of the evil of complaining, under the worſt and foreſt of afflictions; and therefore I only name it here.

Thirdly, taking iniquity in the largeſt notion,

Obſerve;

Sin deſerves no reſpect from us.

Sinners deſerve no reſpect, much leſs doth ſin. 'Tis one part of the character which *David* gives of a Citizen of *Sion*, (*Pſal.* 15. 4.) He is one, *in whoſe eyes a vile perſon* (that is, a wicked perſon, a perſon given up to his luſts) *is contemned*. That which makes a perſon vile and contemptible, is worſe than a vile perſon, and therefore ſhould have leſs reſpect, or more contempt from us. Remember, ſin is the only thing which makes any perſon vile; ſhould we then give any reſpect to ſin? ſhould we give reſpect to that which brings utter diſreſpect upon us? have we any reaſon to honour that which brings us to ſhame? to regard that which makes us regardleſs both with God and all good men? However ſome men are regarded with men for their wickedneſs, I mean with wicked men (they regard their like the more, when they are moſt like them) yet (I ſay) ſin makes every man regardleſs with God and every good man: Therefore regard it not, yea, ſlight it, trample upon it. Take that

For a Fourth note in the affirmative;

Iniquity is utterly to be diſregarded and abominated;

We ſhould abhor it and caſt it out of our ſoules, we ſhould throw it out of our converſation.

Note Fifthly;

To regard iniquity is the marke of a wicked man.

As 'tis his property to diſregard all good (*Pſa.* 26.4.) *he ſeteth not his heart to that which is good, he abhorreth not evill*; that is, he hath no regard to the good of duty, and he hath a great regard to the evill of iniquity. His not abhorring evill is to be interpreted in the affirmative, he regards, reſpects evil, he prizes and values his very baſeſt luſts before the Law and Will of God. *David* diſclaimeth this baſe ſpirit (*Pſ.* 66.18.) *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear my prayers.* Now who are they whoſe prayers God will not hear? We have the anſwer made by the blind man (*Joh.* 9.) *God heareth not ſinners*: whom will he hear then, ſeeing all are ſinners? His meaning is, he hears not *impenitent ſinners*, unbelieving ſinners, ſuch as trade on in a way of ſin. Thus *David* concluded, *if I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear me*; for if I regard iniquity, I am of thoſe ſinners whoſe prayers God will not hear. Though *David* had done great iniquities, and had much iniquity in his heart, yet he regarded no iniquity in his heart, *If I have looked to any iniquity in my heart* (ſaith he) as the word is; that is, if iniquity in my heart be ſmiled upon, if I have pleaſed my ſelf with it, if I have given it a good look, I were a wicked man, and God heareth not ſuch.

Laſtly, from theſe words, *Elihu* ſpeaking thus to *Job*, a godly man, *take heed, regard not iniquity*,

Note;

A godly man ſhould take heed of doing any thing which may ſignifie the leaſt reſpect or regard unto ſin, the leaſt reſpect to the leaſt ſin.

Indulge not thy ſelf in complainings and impatience, leſt thou be found to *regard iniquity*, as *Job* is here charged in the next words.

For this thou haſt choſen rather than affliction.

Here

Here *Elihu* applieth the matter yet cloſer to *Job*; I have adviſed thee, *to take heed, not to regard iniquity*, and my admonition is not without cauſe; I do not ſpeak at random, for I tell thee plainly, *thou haſt choſen this rather than affliction*; that is, thou haſt regarded iniquity. To chooſe is to regard.

This thou haſt choſen rather than affliction. This, What? This ſin, impatient complaining and expoſtulating with God, this ſin thou haſt choſen. The word which we tranſlate *to chooſe*, denotes a very ſerious and exact work of the ſoul. Choice is a deliberate act; we chooſe upon diſcuſſion and debate; choice is made upon trial and proof. Thus the word is uſed (*Exod.* 17. 9.) *Joſhua* was to take choſen, approved, experienced men, to go to the war againſt *Amalek*. *David gathered all the choſen men of Iſrael* (2 *Sam.* 6. 1.) And thus the Lord ſpake to the houſe of *Jacob* by the Prophet (*Iſa.* 48. 10.) *I have choſen thee*; Where? *I have choſen thee in the fire of affliction.* Affliction is a tryer, and either diſcovers who are fit to be choſen, or fits and prepares them to be choſen. *This thou haſt choſen*

בחר *Elegit, ſelegit.*

Rather than affliction.

But may we ſay that *Job* ſat down, and putting his affliction in one ballance and ſin in another, choſe iniquity rather than affliction, or ſin rather than ſuffering? Surely the bent of *Jobs* ſpirit, the frame of his heart was far otherwiſe; nor is it conſiſtent with a gracious ſtate, or a ſtate of grace, to ſit down and make a perfect election of any ſin, upon any tearms whatſoever. Therefore the word *chooſing* may be taken in a milder ſence, or in a more moderate intendment; as if *Elihu* had ſaid, *Thou haſt ſpoken and done ſuch things, thou haſt behaved thy ſelf ſo under thine afflictions, as that a man may ſay, ſurely thou haſt choſen iniquity rather than affliction; thou haſt given others great cauſe to judge thus of thee.* *Elihu* did not purpoſe to faſten this upon *Job*, that he had purpoſely concluded to chooſe ſin rather than affliction; but he had taken liberty (through the violence of his temptations and the extreamity of his paines) to uſe ſuch impatient ſpeeches and actings as might be interpreted, in a ſence, a chooſing of iniquity (that is, impatience) rather than affliction; that is, a quiet ſufferance of affliction. *This thou haſt choſen rather than affliction*, or, (As ſome render it) *For this cauſe haſt thou choſen any thing rather*

Præ afflictione *i.e. magis quam afflictionem, hoc eſt tolerantiam afflictionis. Meton mio ſubjecti.* Piſc.

rather than affliction, thou hast chosen what came next rather than affliction; or, *thou hast chosen this because of thine affliction*, so others read it; that is, thou hast been so prest with thine affliction and trouble, that thou carest not what thou chusest.

Mr. *Broughton* thus; *Beware thou look not to sorrow, to choose that for thy affliction.* The summe of all is, as if *Elihu* had thus bespoken *Job* in this part of the verse; *O Job, whereas God requires of thee to give him glory in the humble submission of thy soul unto him, and sitting patiently under his mighty hand, thou hast behaved thy self quite otherwise, thou hast carried it stoutly, and uttered very bitter complainings of thy condition, thou hast not given God the glory of his soveraignty, of his holiness, justice, purity and goodness, in thy affliction, thou hast not set thy self to do this as then shouldst, but thou hast run out exceedingly, and overshot thy self; So that, I may even say of thee, thou hast chose this iniquity, rather than submitted to thy affliction.*

Elihu speakes reprovingly, *this thou hast chosen*; Is this a good choice?

Hence note, First;

Sin, or that which is sinful, ought not to be chosen whatsoever we choose.

As *Solomon* counseleth, in the book of *Proverbs, with all thy gettings get understanding*, he meanes spiritual understanding; as if he had said, *What ever thou are getting be sure thou get wisdom for thy soul, wisdom to salvation, wisdom for eternity; in all thy gettings get understanding*: So I may say in this place, *among all your choosings be sure you never choose sin; that's not to be chosen, leave that out, or pass that by in all your elections.* This is a point of very large compass; it suits not my work here, to insist much upon it, yet I shall take leave a little; *What ever you choose, choose not sin.* Why?

First, Sin is evil in it self, and that which is (*malum in se*) evil in it self, or evil it self, is not the object of choice; no man is to choose evil, nor properly can choose it.

Secondly, Choose not sin, for sin is an *evil forbidden*, the Law is against it, and the Gospel too.

Thirdly, Choose not sin, for sin is a dishonour to God, and we should rather choose to die than dishonour God.

Fourthly, Choose not sin, for it brings destruction upon man.

Sin

Sin strictly and abstractly considered cannot properly be chosen. A rational creature cannot choose sin properly, because sin is evil; and election being the office of the Will, whose adæquate object is good, sin, strictly taken, cannot be chosen. But sin is often chosen, and 'tis the choice of most men, they choose iniquity rather than affliction; iniquity is the choice and the beloved of many a mans soul. But how? It is under the pretence of something that is good; no man can choose it as 'tis evil. For though some love sin and choose sin for sins sake (such come up highest and neareſt to the frame of the devil, as they, that do good for goods sake come neareſt to the holy Angels) yet, I say, sin is alwayes chosen under some consideration or shadow of good; and if any man choose to sin without respect to profit or gaine, yet he hath some good in his eye, namely to please himself, he would have his will, and will not let God have his will; and this is good to him who is starke naught. But usually sin is chosen upon one of these three accounts.

First, sin is very often chosen (by a mistake) for that which is good. They who (as the Apostle speaks, *Heb.* 5. 12.) *are unskilful in the word of righteousness*, they who have not *senses exercised to discern between good and evil*, are very apt to choose evil in stead of good, that is, thinking it to be good. Thus error in opinion is chosen, upon a mistake, for truth; and iniquity in practise, is chosen, upon a mistake, for duty. Of such the Prophet speakes (*Isa.* 5. 20.) *They call evil good, and good evil, they put darkness for light, and light for darkness*: which, as some do knowingly, out of perverseness of spirit; so others ignorantly, out of unsoundness of judgement, imagining that to be good which is evil, and that to be light which is nothing else but darkness, that to be sound doctrine which is error, and that holy worship which is superstition. So did *Paul* before he was converted, he chose iniquity, and thought he had done very well; *I thought* (saith he) *I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus Christ* (Acts 26.) I thought it my duty, I verily thought I ought to persecute and vex those who beleeved in Jesus, where-ever I found them. And Jesus Christ himself forewarns his Disciples (*John* 16. 2.) that *the time was coming, that whosoever killed them would think they did God service.* Thus many do not understand what is right, and so choose what is wrong.

Secondly,

Secondly, Others chooſe that which is evil, hoping that ſome good will come of it, that God may have ſome glory by it, and men themſelves and others may have ſome advantage by it. This reproach was caſt upon the Apoſtles and their doctrine, which St. *Paul* rejected with higheſt diſdain (*Rom.* 3.8.) *Not as we are ſlanderouſly reported, and as ſome affirm, that we ſay, let us do evil that good may come thereof, whoſe damnation is juſt.* The glory of the free grace of God will be manifeſted in the pardoning of our ſin, come therefore (ſay ſome) let us ſin our fill, that ſo the immeaſurableneſs of the Lords goodneſs and mercy may appear. Woe to thoſe who make ſuch inferences, their damnation is juſt. To do evil upon any hopes of good by it (though it be the glory of God) ſubjects to the worſt evil of ſuffering, damnation. Others chooſe ſin; Why? They look ſome good will come by it, that is, ſome profit. If we ſtrain our conſciences to do this, we may get or keep favour with men; if we do this evil, it may gain us acceptance in the world. Many chooſe evil, becauſe in doing ſo, they ſwim with the ſtream, and comply with the *many*, or as the Apoſtle ſpeakes, with *the courſe of this world*; theſe chooſe evil, becauſe they would be in the faſhion of the moſt, they conſider which way the world is like to go, and ſet themſelves to go that way.

Thirdly, Others do evil hoping to avoid and eſcape danger by it; they chooſe the evil of ſin, that they may eſcape the evil of puniſhment. As many ſin for a little advantage, ſo others to avoid loſs, and that they may ſleep in a whole skin. Some will deny what they have done, to ſave themſelves: No body can prove it againſt us, we will deny it, and ſo avoid trouble, and keep out of the reach of danger. Yea, for this cauſe many deny the truth and renounce the wayes of God, in which they have walked. *Demas* forſook *Paul*, he left the Church of God, that he might keep in with, and cloſe to the world. Upon theſe pretences and hopes many chooſe evil, not meerly and barely in it ſelf, but as it comes thus clothed: As ſome chooſe it through ignorance, ſo others upon hopes of getting good, and not a few upon hopes of avoiding evil, and keeping out of hazzard and harmes-way. But what-ever worldly good any gain, or danger they eſcape, by chooſing iniquity, that choice brings them into greater danger, and ſubjects them to the loſs of a greater good.

This

This thou haſt choſen rather than affliction. The particular *iniquity* (as hath been ſhewed) was impatience.

Hence note;

He that gives himſelf up to unquietneſs and impatience under the afflicting hand of God, chooſes ſin rather than affliction.

The Lord by *Moſes* told his People, when they ſhould be brought into great tribulation, becauſe of their ſin and uneven walkings, becauſe of their breaking the Lords Statutes and Commandments (*Lev.* 26.41.) *If they ſhall accept of the puniſhment of their Iniquity, then it ſhall be well with them.* If at ſuch a time ye ſtand not complaining and murmuring againſt me, but ſhall well accept or take the puniſhment kindly, and kiſs the Rod, acknowledging how you have provoked me, and walked unworthy of former mercy; then I will ſhew you favour, and renew your mercies: But if in affliction you fall a murmuring, and ſay, ſurely the Lord hath caſt us quite off, there's no hope, you chuſe iniquity rather than affliction.

Thirdly, *Elihu* in this doth not only reprove *Job* for doing that which was very evil in it ſelf, but he reproves him for doing that which was very evil to himſelf; *this thou haſt choſen rather than affliction.* As if he had ſaid, Thou doſt not know thine own good, in making this choyce. We ſay, *He is a wiſe man that underſtands his own good.*

Hence note;

They make a very bad and miſerable choyce for themſelves, who chuſe iniquity rather than affliction.

Thus *Solomon* concludes for Wiſdom (*Prov.* 8.36.) *He that ſinneth againſt me wrongeth his own ſoul.* He that ſinneth, wrongs Chriſt, but Chriſt paſſeth that over, and ſeemeth to ſay, I will bare your wrongs, but pray take heed to your ſelves, will you not love your ſelves? will you not abſtain from ſin out of love to your ſelves? *he that ſinneth againſt me wrongs his own ſoul; all that hate me* (that is, my wayes) *they love death*: And ſurely there is no great beauty in death, that we ſhould love it and deſire it. *They chuſe very ill for themſelves, that chuſe ſin,* the wages whereof is death. I grant, to chuſe affliction is but a hard choyce (af-

fliction

ſliction is not good in it ſelf) but affliction, if choſen, may prove good; it may be very good to us, it may bring in much good to us: and therefore there is wiſdome, not only in chuſing any affliction, rather than ſin, but in chuſing ſome one affliction rather than another. But what good doth he chuſe, that chuſes ſin? Happy is the man that endures correction, or affliction, ſaith the Scripture in many places; but doth it ſay any where, *Happy is the man that commits iniquity?* If you chuſe affliction rather than iniquity, you chuſe a great deal of good. Firſt, *David* could ſay upon tryal (*Pſal.* 119. 71.) *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy ſtatutes.* Did ever *David* ſay, it is good for me that I have ſinned, which is to unlearn or break Statutes? did he ever pleaſe himſelf in thinking that he had ſinned? he did even pleaſe himſelf that he had been afflicted; that was good, becauſe he learned Commandments by it; he grew a better Scholler, then he was in that beſt learning of all, the knowledge of the Commandments of God.

Again, Secondly, It is good to be afflicted; why? afflictions are the exerciſes of our Graces, the exerciſe of our Faith, the exerciſe of our patience, the exerciſe of our ſelf-denyal. 'Tis a good thing to have our Graces exerciſed, for thereby they are encreaſed. If you chuſe affliction, you ſhall probably have that good by it, the encreaſe of your beſt things, your Graces.

Thirdly, Affliction purgeth out our corruptions, and that is good. Is it not good to have a diſeaſe, or an ill humour, purged out? this good comes by affliction. But doth the committing of ſin purge ſin? doth the Stock of ſin abate by ſinning? does the ill humour ſpend it ſelf? no, the ill humour rather increaſeth. When you chuſe ſin, you weaken your Graces, and cheriſh your corruptions; but when you refuſe ſin, your corruptions weaken or ſpend their ſtrength. Do you think when you have committed one ſin, that the ſoul is made more unable to, or more averſe from the ſame or another ſin? When you have ſatisfied the call of one luſt, will it now let you alone, and call no more? no, not at all; the more you ſin, the more you may; the more you ſin, the more doth the Stock of ſin increaſe and grow in you.

Fourthly, Affliction is a means to take us off or wean us from the World: O what a good is that! we being ſo apt to dote upon

upon it. The ſin of the Age is, falling in love with the World; therefore it may be good for us to be ſoundly afflicted, that we may be weaned from the World, and from all things in the world, and be kept, where our true intereſt is, in the boſom of Chriſt, or cloſe to him. But if you chuſe iniquity, will that take you off from the World? no; the more ſin, the more love of the World; for ſin and the World are akin, they are of a Blood; therefore the more you have to do with the one, the more you will have to do with the other.

Fifthly, Affliction brings us nearer to God. That which takes us off from the World, brings us neerer to God: this is an excellent advantage, a great good of affliction. But chuſe ſin, and will that bring us neerer to God? Sin is a departure from God: The Lord ſaith to ſinners, *Ye are departed and gone.* Sin is ſo far from bringing us nearer to God, that as all in a ſtate of ſin, are far off from God, ſo every act of ſin widens the diſtance, and puts us farther off from God.

Sixthly, Affliction is our conformity to Chriſt. If you chuſe affliction, you chuſe that which makes you look like Chriſt; for he was a man of ſorrows in this world, he was not in the ruff and jollity, in the power and pomp of this world, but low, and of no reputation, acquainted with grief all his dayes. If then you chuſe affliction rather than ſin, you chuſe conformity to Chriſt; but chuſing iniquity rather than affliction, you take up the utmoſt diſformity to Chriſt, *who knew no ſin, nor was any guile found in his mouth.* He took all our afflictions upon him, but he would not touch our ſin, as a doer of it, only as (in our ſtead) a ſufferer for it.

How great is the good of affliction! But is there any good at all in ſin? Upon all theſe conſiderations the Apoſtle ſaith, When God, the Father of ſpirits, afflicts his ſons and daughters, he doth it *for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holineſs* (Heb. 12. 10, 11.) The Lord afflicts us for our profit, but he doth not ſay I have let you ſin for your profit: For though the Lord is able to, and often doth, bring good out of ſin, yet not inſtrumentally, but occaſionally. Therefore the Scripture attributes no profit to ſin, but ſpeaking of ſin, it ſaith, *What fruit have ye of thoſe things whereof ye are now aſhamed* (Rom. 6 21.) ſhew your gain; what are your advantages? what the revenues which your luſts

have brought in? what have you got by your malice, by your wrath, by your conformity and compliance with the world? have theſe bought you in any advantage? are you bettered by them? what fruit have you of thoſe things, whereof you are now aſhamed? Let us therefore often conſider *Moſes*'s choyce (*Heb.* 11. 25.) *Moſes* was a wiſe and a holy man; and what did he? He choſe *rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon.* Herein try your ſpirits. Chriſt ſet two things before *Moſes*; Come, *Moſes*, here's affliction, you muſt be afflicted, and afflicted with the people of God (which are the greateſt afflictions, you ſhall be ſure to be laſhed with the ſmarteſt ſoreſt Rod in their Company) or here is *Egypt*, and all the contentments that ſin can give; which will you have *Moſes*? O give me afflictions with the people of God (ſaid *Moſes*) Let the world ruffle and rant in the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon, for my part I will have affliction, O give me affliction. In this choyce *Moſes* approved himſelf a wiſe man, and underſtood his good. So did the Martyrs. Come, will you have a priſon, or deny Chriſt? a Halter, or forſake the Faith? will you into this fire, or will you commit that iniquity? O ſay they, give us Priſons, Halters, Fires, rather than conform to your wickedneſs. Remember this Point, this is a needful Point for us at all times. I would adde theſe three things further about it. Chuſe affliction rather than ſin; why?

Firſt, Becauſe ſin is worſe than all affliction. Secondly, Becauſe ſin is the Sting of all affliction. If you are in an afflicted condition, and your conſciences tell you you have been baſe, vile, complying with the World, and diſſembling or falſe-hearted with God; if your hearts tell you, you have been rotten at the heart, this will be the ſting of your afflictions. What is the ſting of death? The Apoſtle anſwers (1 *Cor.* 15. 56.) *The ſting of death is ſin.* Would a man chuſe a ſting? Surely you chuſe a ſting when you chuſe ſin, and that which will afflict you beyond all your afflictions.

Thirdly, Sin is worſe than affliction, for when God would declare his ſevereſt wrath, and bring the greateſt affliction upon the children of men, when he reſolves to afflict a perſon or a people to the utmoſt, he doth not ſay, I will make this man a poor man, or I will ſend plague, or ſickneſs, or famine among this people, but

but he ſaith, I will deliver him or them up into the hands of their ſins, or to the power of their luſts. (*Pſal.* 81. 11.) *Iſrael would none of me* (ſaith the Lord) they were coy, they had other lovers, they would have the world, they choſe ſin, rather than God, and to go a whoring after the creature, rather than keep cloſe to him. What then? *So I gave them up to their own hearts luſts.* As if the Lord had ſaid, *Pray take your courſe, you that love your own inventions, take your fill of them, you that love and would have the vanities of the world, take your fill of them.* The Lord doth not threaten them with famine and peſtilence, no nor with hell, but he threatens them with ſin, and leaves them to the power of iniquity. Thus he gave up the old Gentile *Romans to vile affections*, (*Rom.* 1. 26, 28.) Let them be victorious, let them be rich, let them ſubdue all Nations under their iron hands, let *Rome* be the Head and Miſtreſſe of the world, and command all people, let all ſtoop to their power, but ſaith God, *I will give them up to vile affections*, they ſhall be baſely Idolatrous, and baſely wanton, and baſely gluttonous, and baſely drunken, and baſely ambitious, and baſely envious: As they were above all people of the world in outward glory and power, ſo God left them under the power of their luſts, and gave them up to glut themſelves with wickedneſs; *He gave them up to a reprobate minde, to do things that are not convenient.* 'Tis the moſt terrible of all afflictions, when God makes a ſin an affliction, and gives men up to hardneſs of heart, to pride, to a ſpirit of looſeneſs and wantonneſs; here is a miſchief indeed, the miſchief of ſin.

Laſtly, Obſerve;

Our Avoydance of, or eſcape from the greateſt affliction in the world, will not bear us out in the choyce of any iniquity.

We may underſtand and proſecute this poynt two wayes.

Firſt, *As to guilt.* It will no way excuſe us before God, to ſay, I forbore to do duty when commanded by God, I did evill becauſe commanded by man, not out of any diſlike of my duty, or liking of iniquity, but only to avoyd thoſe afflictions, which I ſaw inevitably falling upon me, in caſe I had either done the one, or not done the other. This plea will not hold before God, for

any mans diſcharge from guilt upon either account. And though there may be ſome ſeaſons wherein a duty may be laid by or omitted, yet there is no ſeaſon wherein any iniquity may be choſen or committed.

Secondly, We cannot be excuſed, as to *Diſcretion*. We are fools, and act below, not only *gracious* but *rational* men, if we chuſe iniquity to avoyd any affliction, whether that affliction or ſuffering, be, firſt, our own; or ſecondly, the ſuffering of others. Firſt, though nearly related, & very near to us, wife, children, &c. Secondly, though many, never ſo many, a whole Nation, a whole world, the Church. I believe that aſſertion of St *Auguſtine* will be found ſound and Orthodox Divinity; *Better let the world periſh, than attempt to ſave it by telling an officious ly.*

The evil of ſin is ſo bad that if any good could come by it (which of it ſelf cannot) it were not worth the having: Some ſaid in the Apoſtles times, & they ſaid it of the Apoſtles, (*Rom.* 3. 8.) *Let us do evil that good may come of it.* God by his infinite power, wiſdome, and goodneſs, brought good out of evil, even ſalvation to man out of the fall of the firſt man; but if any man, or ſort of men, ſhall project the obtainment of good by the doing of evil, the Apoſtle in the ſame place hath given them this doom, *Their damnation is juſt*; nothing is more juſt or righteous, than their damnation, who hope to get good for themſelves or others by doing evil, which is it ſelf injuſtice and unrighteouſneſs.

JOB,

JOB, Chap. 36. Verſ. 22, 23.

22. *Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him?*

23. *Who hath enjoyned him his way? or who can ſay, thou haſt wrought iniquity?*

IN theſe two verſes *Elihu* proſecuteth the admonition which he had given *Job* in the 21 verſe, to take heed of uttering any thing raſhly concerning Gods dealings with him, or, of *chooſing iniquity rather than affliction*: And he preſſeth the admonition by two great arguments.

Firſt, From the power and wiſdome of God, in the 22th verſe; *Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him?*

Secondly, He urgeth it by an argument taken from the ſoveraignty of God, as alſo from his moſt exact Juſtice, (*v.* 23.) *Who hath enjoyned him his way? or who can ſay, thou haſt wrought iniquity?* As if he had ſaid, *Take heed how thou accuſeſt the Juſtice of God in any of his dealings with thee: If God be of ſuch power, of ſuch wiſdome, of ſuch ſoveraignty, of ſuch integrity, then conſider well what thou ſpeakeſt, yea what thou thinkeſt of God; beware thou ſpeakeſt not a word, nor conceiveſt a thought amiſs of him. Conſider, I ſay, God himſelf, his wayes, and works, throughly, and then wilt conclude with me, That though many in the world have great power, and have left the markes of it in many places, and upon many perſons; yet none like God, either, firſt, in doing his own work, or ſecondly, in directing or teaching us how to do ours.*

So that *Elihu* by this report and commendation of the power and wiſdome of God, ſeems to comfort *Job* in the aſſurance or hope of better things, if he would hearken to and accept his counſel; for as God had mightily afflicted and broken him, ſo he was as mighty to heal thoſe breaches, and deliver him; he only waited to ſee him in a better frame, that he might be gracious, (*Iſa.* 30. 18.) That's the general ſum of the words.

Ecce, deus excelſus in fortitudine ſua. Vulg. ישניב *excelſus eſt, intranſitive ſumi poteſt; attollit robur ſuum, i. e. robore ſuo excelſus eſt.*

Verſ. 22. *Behold, God exalteth by his power.*

Some read, *God is high in his own power*; that carrieth *Elihu's* reaſon

reaſon ſtrongly in it, God is exalted in his power above all others; and therefore it is no way ſutable or conſentaneous unto reaſon, that the greater power ſhould be queſtioned, much leſs condemned of injuſtice by the leſſer power: There muſt be a parity, a coordination, or a co-equality at leaſt, if not a ſuperiority, where judgement is given. That's a great truth, *God is exalted in his own power.*

David (Pſal. 21. 13.) turns it into a prayer, or wiſh, *Be thou exalted, O Lord, in thine own ſtrength.* He makes a like prayer, (*Pſal.* 108. 5.) The Lord in other places declareth himſelf peremptorily in it, (*Pſal.* 46. 10.) *Be ſtill, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the Heathen, I will be exalted in the Earth.* It ſhall be ſo whether men will or will not; whether men will or no, God will be exalted, becauſe he is exalted in his own power, not in any derived power, or power given him from the creature, Men or Angels. The power which God puts forth in his works exalt him, or ſhew him to be a great, a mighty God. *Behold, God is exalted by his own power.*

But we tranſlate the Text (and ſo I conceive it more fitly ſutes the ſcope of *Elihu*) as expreſſing an act of God towards others; *Behold, God exalteth by his power.* So Mr *Broughton*; *Mark, the Omnipotent ſets up by his ſtrength.*

Behold:

(As hath been ſhewed) is a note both of attention and admiration.

God.

The ſtrong God, the potent, the omnipotent God, who is able to overcome all difficulties,

Exalteth;

שגב *Elevare, exaltare, corroborare, ſtabilem & inconcuſſum reddere.*

The word which we render *to exalt*, ſignifieth to ſet in an inacceſſible height, or to exalt very high; and not only ſo, but to eſtabliſh in that exaltation, yea ſo to confirme and corroborate him that is ſet up in ſuch a height, that no power is able to moleſt, trouble, or afflict him; and therefore a word coming from this root ſignifieth *a fortified Caſtle or Tower*; ſuch places, if any, are exalted and lifted up on high. *Behold, God exalteth*; As if *Elihu* had

had ſaid, *God is not only exalted in himſelf, he is not only lifted up beyond the reach of all creature-annoyances, but he is able to lift up others; and he doth actually exalt his when he pleaſeth, beyond the reach of all danger, beyond the hurtfull power of thoſe who hate them, and therefore have a mind to hurt them.* God is ſo exalted above others, that he can exalt others alſo. *He exalteth by*

His Power;

He hath the power in himſelf. The word which we render *power*, ſignifieth,

Firſt, That might and ſtrength which is corporal, the might and ſtrength of the body.

Secondly, Inward might and ſtrength, whether acquired or infuſed, the might of the mind, wiſdome and pollicy.

Thirdly, Civil might and power, honour and riches. Whatever maketh a man ſtrong, comes under the notion of this word; and every way, in all the Notions of power, God is exalted. *He exalteth by his power.*

But ſeeing 'tis barely aſſerted (*He exalteth by his power*) nothing being expreſſed, it may be queſtioned, whom doth he exalt? or what doth he exalt? I anſwer, Foraſmuch as the Scripture leaveth it at large, and undetermined, we may apply this aſſertion to any, either thing or perſon. God exalteth whom he pleaſeth, and what he pleaſeth. We may take it diſtinctly theſe five wayes.

Firſt, He exalteth *Himſelf* by his power; that is, he exalteth his own Name and Glory, which is neareſt to him, yea, as himſelf.

Secondly, He exalteth every work which he will undertake and engage upon: He doth not only lay the Foundation of his work, and rear up the Walls a little way, but he exalteth by his power till he hath ſet up the *Head-ſtone* of his work (as the Prophet *Zechariah* ſpeaketh, *Chap.* 4. 7.) all that love and fear him *ſhouting and crying, Grace, Grace, to it.* He exalteth his works of Providence, as once he did his work of Creation, to full perfection.

Thirdly, The Lord exalteth thoſe that fear him, for they are moſt properly his *Favourites*; and whom ſhould he exalt but thoſe whom he favoureth? All the worldly exaltations of evill men,

men, are but depreſſions and abaſements, compared with thoſe exaltations and advancements which God intendeth for all that fear him; and ſome he exalteth much in this World.

Fourthly, and more ſpecially, He exalteth by his power (ſuch *Job* then was) thoſe that are caſt down by the oppreſſing power of men, even the poor, and thoſe that have no help. *Thou art he* (ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* 9. 13.) *that lifteſt me up* (or *exalteſt me*) *from the gates of death.* When I am periſhing, when I am ready to be ſwallowed up with death, when I am at the greateſt loſs, even as to life it ſelf, then thou lifteſt me up, thou lifteſt me up from the very gates of death. Again, (*Pſal.* 18. 48.) *He delivereth me from mine enemies, yea thou lifteſt me up above thoſe that riſe up againſt me:* When they are caſting me down, God is exalting and raiſing me up. And if God will raiſe up, who can keep down?

Fifthly, We may take the words in this general ſenſe; Whoſoever is exalted in this world, God exalteth him. The Sparrow cannot fall to the ground, nor the leaſt thing or perſon be lifted from the ground, but by the hand of God. As he exalteth ſome in a way of ſpecial favour, ſo he exalteth the worſt of men in a way of common providence: As none can be exalted if he ſay, no; God is able to put a barr or a ſtop to any mans exaltation; ſo he can exalt whom he will, and none are able to put a barr or a ſtop to their exaltation. *Behold, God exalteth by his power.*

Hence Note;

God is able to exalt any perſon, how low ſoever brought, how much ſoever deſpiſed.

Elihu ſpake this purpoſely to *Job*, who was in a low condition, brought (as it were) to the very gates of death; and he makes this large deſcription of the power of God in exalting thoſe that are caſt down, purpoſely to comfort *Job*, to erect his ſpirit, and cheare his heart, with a bleſſed confidence, that how much ſoever he was at preſent under-foot, or under-hatches, yet he might hope for better things, even to be lifted up, if he humbled himſelf under the mighty hand of God. (*Pſal.* 9. 9.) *The Lord will be a refuge,* (the word in the Text anſwers this) *or an high place, for the oppreſſed.* Places of refuge are uſually high places, and therefore the ſame Hebrew word ſignifieth both an high place and a place of refuge, (*Pſal.* 107. 41.) *He ſetteth the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.* The Prophet (*Iſa.* 33. 16.) Having ſpoken of the man that walketh in his integrity, tels us how it ſhall be with him, *He ſhall dwell on high*; The word is, *He ſhall dwell in the high places*, that is, he ſhall dwell in God, who is moſt high, for evermore; God will exalt him even to as much ſafety, as himſelf is in; *his place of defence ſhall be the munition of Rocks; bread ſhall be given him, his water ſhall be ſure*; He ſhall be houſed with God, yea houſed in God, he ſhall be fed by God, he ſhall lodge under his roof, and ſit (as it were) at his Table, he ſhall have bread enough, and water enough, and both ſure enough.

Participes exiſtit divinæ fælicitatis, atq; conſortes ac manſores.

And if the Lord exalteth thus by his power, let none be diſcouraged in their afflictions and caſtings down. The Lord alone is ſufficient, yea allſufficient; and he exalteth not only by his will, that is, he hath not only a will to exalt, but he exalteth by his power, that is, he hath power enough to exalt whom he will. What power ſoever is in the creature, 'tis the Lords power; 'tis a ſtream from his Ocean, and when the Lord is pleaſed to remove all power from the creature, he hath a ſufficient reſerve of power in himſelf, or in his own hand, by which he can command deliverance, yea exaltation. Therefore do not ſpeak either deſpondingly or deſpairingly, as if all hope were gone, when at any time all humane power is gone; *for God exalteth by his* (own) *power*; and as it followeth in the Text,

Who teacheth like him?

As if *Elihu* had ſaid, God is not good only at acting, but he is good at inſtructing, and he is beſt at both. He is beſt or beyond all in power; He is beſt or beyond all in wiſdome and underſtanding, and therefore *who teacheth like him?*

At the 15th verſe of this Chapter, we have the ſubſtance of what is here aſſerted, and ſo upon the matter, 'tis but the ſame thing repeated; there it is, *He delivereth the poor*: here, *He exalteth by his power*; There 'tis ſaid, *He openeth their ear to inſtruction*, here, *Who teacheth like him?* The words are a divine chalenge, *Who teacheth like him?* Bring forth the man, bring forth the Angel that can. The word which here we render, *to teach*, in its firſt ſenſe ſignifieth *to caſt a Dart, Javelin*, or *Stone*.

Verbum יורה *commune ad pluviam, et ad d Strinam, vel legem, qua perfunditur et excolitur animus ad fructus bonorum operum.* תורה

It signifieth also to *raine*, and to the *raine* which fals from heaven, because that is as it were, cast from the clouds to the earth. Hence by a Metaphor it signifieth to *teach* or *instruct*, because holy doctrine or instruction cometh down like raine from heaven upon the minds and hearts of those that are taught. *My doctrine shall distill as the dew, and my speech shall drop as the raine*, said *Moses* (Deut. 32. 1.) And hence the whole Law of God is expressed by a word in the Hebrew coming from this roote, that being powred down from heaven in showres of doctrine to make men fruitfull in every good word and work. In answer to which,

Nullus ei similis in Legislatoribus. Vulg.

some translate this latter part of the verse, *There is no Law-giver like unto him.* Who is a Law-giver like him? or there is no Law-giver like him. To give Law, or to be a Law-giver, is more than barely to be a teacher, though he that teacheth, doth also (in a sense) give Lawes.

Here, I conceive, we take the fittest and most suitable signification of the word, when we render it *by teaching, Who teacheth like him?* As if he had said, None can teach like God, and therefore surely none can teach him how to governe the world, or to dispose of any mans person or condition, as thou, O *Job*, hast rashly or overboldly done; for while thou hast complained so much and so often of his dealings with thee, thou hast (upon the matter) attempted to teach him. But, *Who teacheth like him?* Where shall we find any able to give instruction, and apply doctrine like God? God is exalted infinitely in power, and yet he condescends to be a teacher, or an instructer; God doth not stand upon his power only, he saith not, I have power to do what I will, I can force all men to my will, or break them if they will not, but he instructs and perswades, he labours to allure the soul into a right understanding of his will, and submission to it. *Who teacheth like him?*

Hence note;

First, *The great goodness of God: that he who hath all power to command, should yet vouchsafe to instruct; that he who is the Judge, will also be the Teacher of his People.*

This is the great Promise in the Covenant of grace, *They shall be all taught of God* (*John* 6. 45.) Some things may be known by

by the light of nature, of which knowledge God is the Author, in the same sense, as he is of all natural Powers and faculties. But here *Elihu* intends a spiritual knowledge, both of God and of our selves, or a teaching of divine things by divine chastenings, both with respect to what we should do and desire, as also with respect to what we should shun and avoid, which is the work of God alone by his grace and Spirit. Thus *David* shews how God is teaching while he is chastening (*Psal.* 99. 12.) *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest out of thy Law.* God teacheth, First, by his Word, (that's his ordinary way of teaching) Secondly, he teacheth by his Works; and those both the workes of Creation and of Providence, and by those, whether workes of Mercy or of Judgement: By all these meanes God teacheth. But that which *Elihu* chiefly aimeth at in this place (speaking to afflicted *Job*) is his teaching by affliction, *Who teacheth like him?* As if he had said, God doth not lay his hand upon thee by affliction, only to make thee smart, but to make thee wise; he is instructing thee while he is afflicting thee. Further, as God teacheth by his Word and by his Works, so he teacheth most eminently by his Spirit, who alone maketh the teaching both of his Word and of his Works effectual upon the hearts of the hearers and beholders. Many are taught, but none to purpose, without the Spirit. *Who teacheth like him?*

Note Secondly;

God is no ordinary teacher; The teachings of God are above all other teachings; There is no teacher to be compared with God.

Elihu doth not say, Who teacheth besides God? There are many other teachers, but there is not one who teacheth like him. Some may say, wherein doth the excellency of divine teaching lie? how hath that the supereminence above all other teachings? Take the answer briefly in seven words.

First, none teacheth so plainly and clearly as God. The teachings of men are but dark and obscure to the teachings of God. Christ said (*John* 16. 26.) *I shall no more speak unto you in parables, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.* God speaks by his Word and Spirit to the lowest and meanest understanding.

Secondly, none teacheth like God; that is, ſo mildly, ſo moderately, ſo condeſcendingly to the condition and capacity of thoſe with whom he hath to do. Chriſt ſaid (*John* 16. 12.) *I have many things to ſay unto you, but ye cannot bear them now*; and therefore I will not ſay them now, *I will not burden you beyond your ſtrength*. I know what leſſons, what inſtructions you are fit for, and I will give you only theſe and no more, till ye are better prepared to receive them; I will give you only milk becauſe ye are children, and ſo not able to digeſt ſtrong meat.

Thirdly, none teacheth like God, ſo patiently and meekly. There is nothing doth more provoke the paſſion of a teacher, than the untowardneſs and dulneſs of thoſe that are taught. It was a very good Rule given by one of the Ancients, *he that will teach children, muſt in a manner be a child*; He muſt conſider what they are, and forme himſelf to their condition, elſe ſhe will never have the patience to teach them. O with what patience doth the infinite and only wiſe God teach his children! (*Iſa.* 28. 9, 10.) *He giveth line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little*. Here is the patience of God; He doth not ſay, if ye cannot take it now, I will teach you no more; No, ſaith God, I will give precept upon precept, and line upon line; though former precepts have not been received, yet I will give you more, *here a little and there a little*, ye ſhall have another little to the former little. God was forty yeares tutoring and teaching the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs, to fit them for the poſſeſſion of *Canaan*. *Theſe three yeares*, ſaith Chriſt, *have I come looking for fruit*, and all that while he was teaching them, to make them fruitfull; nor was he haſty then, but upon the interceſſion of the vineyard-dreſſer, waited one year more. O the patience of God in teaching!

Fourthly, none teacheth like him, that is, ſo conſtantly and continually; He teacheth, and he is alwayes teaching; there is no hour, no moment, but one way or other God is teaching; By every thing we hear, or have to do with, in the wayes of his providence, he is teaching us. Beſides, how conſtant is God in teaching us formally, as 'tis ſaid, in the Prophet (*Jer.* 35. 14, 15.) *I have ſent unto you all my ſervants the prophets, riſing up early, and ſending them*: As if the Lord did beſtir himſelf in the morning, to ſend out teachers betimes. *He ſoweth his ſeed in the morning, and in the evening he doth not with hold his hand*, as he requireth us to do

do in all ſorts of duty, whether of charity and righteouſneſs, towards our neighbour, or, of piety and holy worſhip towards himſelf (*Eccl.* 11. 6.)

Fifthly, *none teacheth like* him, that is, ſo truly, ſo unerringly. While men teach they ſometimes miſ-teach, while they lead, they often miſ-lead; they teach error for truth, and unſafe doctrine for ſound; they build wood, hay and ſtubble, in ſtead of gold, ſilver, precious ſtone, upon that ſure foundation Jeſus Chriſt (1 *Cor.* 3. 12.) The beſt, the wiſeſt, and moſt knowing men may erre; only God knoweth the full compaſs of all myſteries, yea he is Truth; therefore his teachings are moſt true.

Sixthly, *none teacheth like him*; that is, ſo *authoritatively*. Men teach in the name and authority of God; but God teacheth in his own name and authority. The Lord giveth Authentity to his own word. If the Lord hath ſaid it, that's warrant enough to receive it and believe it. When Chriſt preached, the people wondered at his doctrine (*Mat.* 7. 29.) *For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes*; that is, there went forth a mighty command with the word of Jeſus Chriſt; He did not, as I may ſay, beg attention and ſubmiſſion to his doctrine, but exact it upon them, and draw it from them. Where God teacheth, he commandeth, his word worketh mightily; when he ſpeaketh, all muſt hear at their peril. Where Princes give the rule and publiſh their Laws, ſubjects muſt hear and obey, or ſuffer for not obeying: How much more where God gives the Rule, and publiſheth his Law!

Seventhly, who teacheth like him? that is, ſo *effectually*, ſo efficatiouſly. As God hath authority to charge his teachings upon us at our peril to receive them, ſo he hath a power to work our hearts to the receiving of them. Who teacheth thus like God? The Miniſters of Chriſt teach in the authority of God, and charge all to receive what they ſay in his Name, but they cannot give an effect to the charge (*Iſa.* 48. 17.) *He teacheth to profit*. One tranſlation ſaith, *He teacheth things profitable*. But that is a lean rendring, for ſo doth every Miniſter that teacheth as he ought; but our rendring carrieth the efficacy of the word of God in it, *He teacheth to profit*; that is, he can make the dulleſt Scholar learn, he can make the moſt ſtubborn heart to ſubmit. Chriſt ſpeaking of this great work of God in teaching,

ſaith

ſaith (*John* 6. 45.) *No man cometh unto me, except the Father draw him.* What is that drawing? It is this teaching, as ye may ſee (*verſ.* 45.) *Every one therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* That is, every one whom the Father hath vouchſafed to teach and inſtruct, that man cometh to me, that is, he believeth and obeyeth the Goſpel, and ſubmitteth both in judgment and practiſe. *Every one that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh to me*: There is not one whom God hath undertaken to teach, that doth miſcarry. (*Iſa.* 32. 4.) *The heart of the raſh ſhall underſtand knowledge*; or, the heart of the haſty. Now haſty and raſh perſons, are heady and inconſiderate perſons, and therefore none of the wiſeſt; they uſually have little judgment or diſcretion, who are much in paſſion; but God can make the *heart of the raſh to underſtand knowledge*; that is, he can make them underſtand and know things aright, who ſeem moſt uncapable of, and are naturally at the greateſt diſtance from a rightneſs of knowledge and underſtanding.

To cloſe the Point, take theſe inferences from the whole.

Firſt, If God be ſuch a teacher, then *ſtay not in the bare teachings of men.* What are the teachings of men to the teachings of God? Though you ſhould have an Angel from heaven to ſpeak to you, yet ſtay not in his teachings, wait for the teachings of God. Till ye are taught of God ye never learn to purpoſe. Set your ſelves, not only as in Gods preſence, but as under his Spirit, to be taught; wait for the moving of the Spirit in every ordinance, as they did for the Angels moving of the waters, who lay at the poole of *Betheſda* for healing (*Joh.* 5. 4.)

Secondly, Seeing God teacheth thus paramount, ſeeing *none teach like him*, then *ſubmit to his teaching.* Do not queſtion any of his rules of life or doctrines of faith, they are all righteous and full of divine truth; you cannot do amiſs if you do, nor believe amiſs if you believe, no, nor miſs of bleſſedneſs in doing and believing, what he hath taught.

Thirdly, *Then appear as they who are taught of God.*

You will ſay, How, or when doth it appear, that we are or have been taught of God? I ſhall anſwer that query in four things.

Firſt, If you are or have been taught of God, *his teaching unteacheth* or emptyeth you, & that in a threefold reſpect. Firſt, of your own carnal principles. The great buſineſs of divine teaching, is to unteach,

teach, to take men off from their own Will and Reaſon, from their own Rules, as alſo from thoſe Cuſtomes which they have received by tradition from their fathers. If you would appear as taught of God, you muſt lay down all theſe. The teachings of grace empty the ſoul of what it hath taken up by Nature. Secondly, the teachings of God empty the ſoul of all ſelf-righteouſneſs. If ye be taught of God ye will be nothing in your ſelves. *Paul*, before the teachings of God came, had confidence in the fleſh, and boaſted in his own righteouſneſs; but when he was taught of God, he threw off all thoſe. Thirdly, If ye are taught of God, that will certainly unteach and empty you of all unrighteouſneſs. The Apoſtle ſpeakes fully to that (*Epheſ.* 4. 20, 21.) *Ye have not ſo learned Chriſt, if ſo be that ye have been taught as the truth is in Jeſus.* If ye have been divinely taught, then this teaching hath emptyed you of the old man; as of all ſelf-righteouſneſs ſo of all unrighteouſneſs towards others. It is impoſſible any ſhould take in the teachings of God, and yet hold any ſinfull practiſings.

Secondly, divine teachings, as they empty and unteach the ſoul, ſo they keep it very humble. Knowledg endangers us naturally to high thoughts of our ſelves, and hath a tendency in it to pride (1 *Cor.* 8. 1.) *Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.* Take knowledge barely as received of men, even the knowledge of divine things (for ye may have a humane knowledge of divine things) this uſually makes the heart ſwell; but the knowledge we have from the teachings of God, makes us humble, it will cauſe us to cry out (as the Prophet did, when the Lord appeared and let out a more than ordinary manifeſtation of his glory, (*Iſa.* 6. 5.) *we are undone.* It was ſo with *Job*, when the Lord had ſchooled him, and made himſelf more fully known to him than ever before, he preſently cried out (*Chap.* 42. 5.) *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye ſeeth thee; wherefore I abhor my ſelf in duſt and aſhes.* Nothing keeps the ſoul ſo humble as the teachings of God. Where we ſee any proud of what they have learned, it is an argument that either they were never taught of God, or, that as yet they have not underſtood his teachings.

Thirdly, The teachings of God do not only empty and humble the ſoul, but they transform the ſoul, and change it into another thing than it was, as to its ſtate and qualities. The teachings of

God

God change not only our manners but our very natures; they not only give a light to the Underſtanding, but a newneſs to the Will, new Affections, new Deſires. This is it which the Apoſtle calls *the new creature* (2 *Cor.* 5. 17.) and that this creature is wrought to its higheſt perfection by the teachings of God, he ſheweth (2 *Cor.* 3. 18.) *We all with open face, beholding as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.* The glaſs wherein we have this ſight of the glory of God, is chiefly the Word. The glory into which we are changed by thoſe ſights, is our conformity to that holineſs which ſhineth in the Word. And this change is twofold; Firſt, from ſin to grace, which is a degree of glory. Secondly, from glory to glory, that is, from a high to a higher, and at laſt to the higheſt degree of grace. Look what the Word is, and calleth us to be, that are we when taught according to the truth of the word, by the power and Spirit of God.

Fourthly, The teachings of God confirm the ſoul in that which is taught, or we have learned. If God teach any divine leſſon, that will ſtick. We receive many leſſons from men, and let them ſlip, as the Apoſtles word is (*Heb.* 2. 1.) Doctrine taught us of God ſettles upon us, we hold the ſubſtance of it, and hold forth the fruit or power of it in every ſeaſon of our lives: yea, if trouble or perſecution ariſe for the truth, they who are taught of God will hold it faſt, though they let go all they have in this world for it. If God teach us the doctrine of Free Grace, how we are juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, without our own works; If God teach us the doctrine of pure Worſhip, how he is to be ſerved, and honoured according to his own will, without the Traditions of men, (as Chriſt ſpake (*Mat.* 15. 9.) If (I ſay) God teach us theſe, or any other ſaving truths, we cannot but hold them: whereas they who have received them from men will part with them on the account of man. Only that which God hath taught us abideth with us, and that no man can take from us. Men may take the life of ſuch a one from him, which God hath given him, but they cannot take the truth from him which God hath taught him. What God teacheth, is written, as it were, with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond, it is graven upon the tables of the heart for ever. Thus we may in ſome meaſure diſcern who are taught of God; and ſeeing they who are

are taught of him, are ſo taught, we may very well inſiſt upon *Elihu*'s chalenge; *Who teacheth like him?* And as there is no teacher like God, ſo neither is there any ruler like God; this alſo is taught us by *Elihu*, as a matter out of queſtion, while in the next verſe he proceeds to make more queſtions, or two queſtions more.

Verſ. 23. *Who hath enjoyned him his way? or who can ſay, thou haſt wrought iniquity?* פקד Proſubere.

This verſe holds out two things. Firſt, the ſoveraignty; Secondly, the integrity of God. God is ſupream in power, and he is righteous in the uſe of his power, and therefore, O *Job*, thou haſt much forgotten both thy ſelf and him, in making ſo many complaints about thy condition, which is indeed to enjoyn God his way, or preſcribe to him how he ſhall govern the world. And ſeeing no man hath enjoyned God his way, who can queſtion him about it, what way ſoever he is pleaſed to take, either with whole Nations, or with any of the ſons of men.

Who hath enjoyned him his way, or, *viſited him?*

No man hath, no man can, *enjoyn him his way*. God hath no viſitors over him. Mr. *Broughton* renders, *Who gave him charge over his wayes*. Like that, *Chap.* 34. 13.

The way of God is any courſe which himſelf taketh, either in governing the world in general, or any perſon in particular; who ſhall inſtruct him about either what or how he ſhall do, whom he ſhall ſpare, whom he ſhall puniſh, whoſe heart he ſhall ſoften, whoſe he ſhall harden, whom he ſhall ſave, whom he ſhall deſtroy, how he ſhall teach, which way he ſhall lead; in a word, how he ſhall adminiſter juſtice and order any of his matters? all muſt be bound to and by his Lawes, he cannot be bound to or by the lawes and preſcripts of any, either in works of Judgment or of Mercy, either in doing good to and for man, or in dealing out of evil. Further,

Who hath enjoyned him his way? By the way of God we may underſtand both the actions of God themſelves, as alſo the reaſons moving him to thoſe actions. As if *Elihu* had ſaid, *Who hath taught God what to do? Who hath, or who can direct him what to do? Who may be ſo bold with God, who is the ſoveraign Lord over all*

the earth, thus to enjoyn him his way ?

Hence note ;

God is the first mover of all that himself doth ;

No man hath shewed him or enjoyned him his way. He is the fountain of light, he seeth what to do ; who hath been his counsellor ? (1 *Cor.* 2. 16.) that is, no man hath, or may instruct him (*Isa.*40. 13. *Rom.* 11. 34.) Again, he is the fountain of power ; none hath authority to direct him, he is above all ; as he needs not the counsel of any, so he receiveth the rule from none. I have had occasion more than once in the process of this Book, to say somewhat of the soveraignty of God over all creatures, and therefore only remind it here, *Who hath enjoyned him his way?*

Or who can say, thou hast wrought iniquity ?

The world is full of iniquity, but in God there is none at all. As God is not obliged to give any men an account of his works, so no man can find any, the least, real fault or defect in any of them; and if his works do not appear so to us now, yet at last they will appear to all without any shadow of iniquity. *Samuel* called together the *Israelites*, and demanded (1 *Sam.* 12.3.) *Whose oxe have I taken* ? &c. *Whom have I defrauded ?* &c. Come charge me, witness against me ; who can say, I have wrought iniquity ? It was much, and a rare thing for *Samuel* to carry it so justly, that none could challenge him ; but when all the world shall be summoned before God, he will be able to put the question, Who of all the sons of men, can say, I have wrought iniquity ? None can say it, but with utmost impudency and highest blasphemy. It is impossible for God to work iniquity ; not only is his Command, but his Will totally against it. What-ever God works is according to his own Will, and his Will is the Rule of Righteousness ; therefore he *can do no iniquity*. There is no iniquity in acting or working according to the Law. If men act according to their will, they usually act iniquity, because their will is not a Law, and 'tis seldome conformed to the Law. The will of no man is so right, or so fixed in the right, as to be received for a Law. But seeing what-ever God doth, he doth it according to his own Will, and his Will is the righteous Rule of all things, therefore all must be right

right which he doth : Who-ever took him tripping in his dealings? *Who can say, he hath wrought iniquity ?*

But why doth *Elihu* speak thus to *Job* ? Had he ever said that God works iniquity ?

I answer, He had not. Yet because he thought God might have done better by good men, or have given out that which was more suitable to their estate, than such continual sorrows and afflictions as he endured, therefore this saying is deservedly imputed to him. For, it would have become *Job*, and doth every man, to say, that is best done which God doth, and that he hath chosen or pitched upon the best, and most proper meanes of doing his own choicest servants good, even when 'tis worst with them in the world, or, when he afflicts them with the greatest evils ; For, *Who can* (then) *say, he hath wrought iniquity ?*

Hence observe ;

First, *The infinite purity of God, as also his love to righteousness and justice ;*

Who, though he be so absolute in power, that none can call him in question (*none can enjoyn him his way*, and therefore none can question him for his way) yet he is so perfect in righteousness, that no fault can be found in him, nor any error in his way. Though the Lord hath power to do what he will, yet he hath no will to do wrong with his power. The Lord neither doth nor can do wrong to those who have, to their power, continually wronged him. And indeed, he that hath all power in his hand, can have nothing but right in his heart. How few are there in power (though their way be injoyned to them, though they have power meerly by commission, from superior powers, though their power be such as they are to give an account of, yet, I say, how few are there in power) who do not much iniquity, who do not, either for want of better information, or, of a better conscience, oppress, grieve and afflict those that have to do with them, or are subject to them ! God may do what he will, yet will do nothing but what is right. How infinitely then is God to be exalted in his truth and righteousness ! And thus the word of truth exalts him (*Deut.* 32.4. 2 *Chr.* 19. 7. *Rom* 9. 14.) There is no unevenness, much less aberration in any of the ways of God, he never trod awry, nor took a false step; *Who can say unto him* (without great iniquity) *thou hast wrought iniquity.*

Hence we may infer;

If God works no iniquity in any of his wayes, whether in his general or ſpecial providences, Then,

All ought to ſit down quietly under the workes of God. Though he bring never ſo great judgments upon nations, he doth them no wrong; though *he break his people in the place of dragons, and cover them with the ſhadow of death*, he doth them no wrong; *Though he ſell his own people for nought*, yet *he doth them no wrong*. All which, and ſeveral other grievances, the Church ſadly bemoans (*Pſal.* 44.) yet without raiſing the leaſt duſt, concerning the juſtice of God, or giving the leaſt intimation of iniquity in thoſe ſeveral ſad and ſevere wayes.

Secondly, We ſhould not only ſit down quietly under all the diſpenſations of God, as having no iniquity in them, *but exalt the righteouſneſs of God in all his diſpenſations, as mingled alſo, & ſprinkled with mercy*. Though we cannot ſee the righteouſneſs of God in ſome of them, yet we muſt believe he is not only ſo, but merciful in all of them; though the day be dark, & we cannot diſcern how this or that ſuits with the righteouſnes, much leſs with the goodneſs and mercy of God, yet ſit down we ought in this faith, that both this and that is righteous, yea, that God is good to *Iſrael*, in the one and in the other. When the prophet was about to touch upon that ſtring, he firſt laid down this principle as unqueſtionable (*Jer.* 12. 1.) *Righteous art thou, O Lord, yet give me leave to plead with thee about thy Judgments: Why doth the way of the wicked proſper?* Why is it thus in the world? I take the boldneſs to put theſe queſtions, O Lord, yet I make no queſtion but thou art righteous, O Lord. It becomes all the ſons of men to reſt patiently under the darkeſt providences of God. And let us all, not only not charg God fooliſhly, but exalt him highly, and cry up both his righteouſneſs and kindneſs towards all his people; For *who can ſay to God, thou haſt wrought iniquity?* Having in ſeveral other paſſages of this book, met with this matter alſo, I here briefly paſs it over.

JOB, Chap. 36. Verſ. 24, 25.

24. *Remember that thou magnifie his work, which men behold.*

25. *Every man may ſee it, man may behold it afar off.*

THeſe two verſes contain the third advice, counſel or exhortation given by *Elihu* to *Job*, ſtirring him up to give glory to God in his providential proceedings with him.

There are three things conſiderable in theſe two verſes.

Firſt, The general duty commanded, which is, to *magnifie the work of God*.

Secondly, We have here a ſpecial reaſon or ground of that duty; the viſibility and plainneſs, yea, more than ſo, the illuſtrioufneſs of his work. The work of God is not only ſuch as ſome men may ſee, but ſuch as *every man may ſee*, yea, *behold afar off*.

Thirdly, We have here an incentive to provoke to this duty, in the firſt words of the Text, *Remember*.

Verſ. 24. *Remember that thou magnifie his work, which men behold.*

To *Remember*, imports chiefly theſe two things.

Firſt, to call to mind what is paſt (*Mat.* 26. 75.) *Then Peter remembred the words of Chriſt*.

Secondly, To remember, is to keep ſomewhat in mind againſt the time to come; in which ſence the Law runs (*Exod.* 20. 8.) *Remember the reſt-day*; that is, keep it in mind, that when-ever it cometh, or upon every return of that day, we may be in a fit poſture and preparation for it; *Remember the reſt*, or *ſabbath day to keep it holy*.

To remember in this place, is ſet (I conceive) in a double oppoſition: Firſt, To forgetfulneſs of the duty here called for; remember and do not forget it. Secondly, To the ſlight performance of the duty here called for; the magnifying of the work of God.

Remem-

Remember that thou magnifie.

As if he had said, *Be thou daily and duely affected with it*, do not put it off with a little, or a bare remembrance; the matter is weighty, consider it fully. As if *Elihu* had said to *Job*, *Thou hast much forgotten thy self, and gone off from that which is thy proper work. I have heard thee much complaining of the workes of God, but thy work should have been to magnifie the work of God. Though God hath cast thee down and laid thee low, yet thy business should have been to exalt the work of God; Remember, it would much better become thee to act another part than this; thou shouldest have acted the part of a magnifier of the work of God, not the part of a complainer against it. Remember that thou*

Magnifie;

תשגיא i. e. תגדיל *Augeas, extollas ejus opus, non accuses ut nunc facis.* Mere.

The root signifieth, to encrease and extol. We may consider a twofold magnifying of the work of God. There is an inward magnifying of the work of God; and there is an outward magnifying of the work of God.

First, There is [illegible]d magnifying of the work of God, when we think highly of it; thus did the Virgin in her song (*Luke* 1. 46.) *My soul doth magnifie the Lord.* Her heart was raised up, and stretched out in high thoughts of God.

Secondly, There is an outward magnifying of the work of God. To speak highly of his work is to magnify his work; to live holily and fruitfully is to magnifie his work. We cannot make any addition to the work of God, there is no such magnifying of it; but we must strive to give the works of God their full dimension, and not lessen them at all. As we must not diminish the number of his works, so we must not diminish the just weight and worth of them. There is such a charge of God to the Prophet about his word (*Jer.* 26. 2.) *Go tell the people all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word.* Deliver thy message in words at length, or in the full length of those words in which it was delivered unto thee. We then magnifie the work of God, when we diminish not a tittle. As we cannot add any thing to it, so we must neither abate nor conceal any thing of it. To magnifie, is not to make the works of God great, but to declare and set forth the greatness of them; that's

that's the magnifying here especially intended. *Remember that thou magnifie his work.*

I shall not stay upon that other reading, *Remember that thou art ignorant of his work.* The same word which we translate, to *magnifie*, with the variation of a point, signifieth *to erre*; hence that translation. There is a profitable sense in it; for indeed the best knowledge which we have of the work of God may be called ignorance, and we said to be ignorant of that work which we are most knowing in. Yet because this is straining of the Text, I pass it by, and keep to our own rendring, *Remember that thou magnifie.*

Memento quod ignores opus ejus. Vulg. Hieronimus confundit שגא *cum* שגה *quamquam* שגה *potius erraro quam ignorare: significat.* Drus.

His work.

What work? Here is no work specified, therefore I answer;

First, All the workes of God are here included; Magnify his work. What-ever is a work of God, what-ever hath the stamp and inscription of God upon it, see that thou magnifie it.

Secondly, and more specially, We may understand this work of God to be the work of Creation, the goodly structure and fabrick of this visible world; and indeed that's a work so great and magnificent, that it ought to be continually remembred and magnified.

Hujus mundi opificium imelligo. Bold.

Thirdly, Others restrain it more narrowly, to that part of the work of God which is eminent in the heavenly meteors, and wonderful changes in the air, together with the motions and influences of the stars, of which we shall find *Elihu* discoursing at large, like a divine Philosopher, in the next Chapter. There are strange works of God in these lower heavens, where those meteors are born and brought forth; *Remember to magnifie those works.*

Fourthly, I rather conceive (though such works of God are afterward spoken of) that *Elihu* intends the work of Providence in both the appearances of it, as it is a white or black work, as it is for good or for evil, as it is in judgment or in mercy. A modern Interpreter pitcheth upon the former, and upon one particular of the former; as if *Elihu* had directly led *Jobs* thoughts back to the Deluge, that work of God in bringing the Flood upon the old world; and if we can but go back and honour God for his past works of Providence, we shall magnifie him for his present,

ſent. As if *Elihu* had ſaid; *Thou complaineſt that thou art overflowed with a deluge of afflictions; but doeſt thou remember how God deſtroyed the whole world at once in the univerſal flood?* But though I think, that may be taken in among other works, yet to reſtraine it to that is a great deal too narrow for this Text. Therefore under this work of God, we may comprehend any great work of God, which is upon record, or which we have heard of, wherein he hath ſhewed his power, wiſdome, and juſtice.

Remember his work;

The work of providence. Thoſe works of providence which are afflictive, have a great place in this Text, becauſe the perſon ſpoken to was one in an afflicted condition. And I conceive *Elihu* directs *Job* not ſo much to magnifie God for the day of proſperity and Sun-ſhine which he once had, as for the day of adverſity and darkneſs, which then covered him. *Remember that thou magnifie his work,*

Which men behold,

Which *the ſons of Enoſh behold*, ſaith Mr *Broughton*. But the word *Sons* is not in the Text, there 'tis only *men*, or *weak men*. The word which we tranſlate to *behold*, hath a double ſignification, and that hath cauſed a double tranſlation: It ſignifieth, firſt, to *ſing*; ſecondly, to *ſee* or *behold*. It is tranſlated by ſeveral in the former ſenſe, *Remember that thou magnifie his work, whereof men have ſang*; The Chaldee Paraphraſe ſaith, *For which juſt men have given praiſe* in Pſalmes and ſongs. Beholding fully a good thing, and praiſing it, or praiſing God for it, go together, as Mr *Broughtons* gloſſe expreſſeth it out of *Ramban*. Gracious and holy men do not only ſpeak, but ſing the wonderful works of God; And, that praiſes were in ſong or verſe, both the Scriptures and many ancient Authors teſtifie. God works, and men ſing the praiſes of God for his works, as *Moſes*, *David*, and *Deborah* did. And we find all the Saints (*Rev.* 15. 3.) ſinging praiſes to the Lord for the great work which he will do in bringing forth Judgement to perfection upon *Babylon*. Thus it is a truth, the work of God is to be ſung and ſet forth in meeter, or in verſe.

שור

De quo cecinerunt viri.

Quod laudaruni juſti viri. Chald:

We take the other tranſlation, *Which men behold*; which, with reſpect to that which followeth (*v*: 25.) where both expreſſions refer

refer to the eye, is, I conceive, moſt proper. *Magnifie the work of God, which men behold*; As if *Elihu* had ſaid, O *Job*, I adviſe thee to leave off ſearching into the ſecrets of God, and ſet thy ſelf to conſider and magnifie thoſe works of God which are plain and lye open to every mans eye.

The word rendred *Behold*, may note, both a tranſient, and an intenſe or fixt beholding, to look wiſhly as we ſay, to look faſtning the eye ſolicitouſly, yea, it imports, not only to behold with the eye of the body, but with the eye of the mind.

Some Interpreters put an Emphaſis upon the word *men*, as noting excellent men, vertuous men, men of vertue in their qualities, and of excellency in their abilities; ſuch are men indeed, worthy men, worthy the name of man; as it hath been ſaid of old, *Where there are no men, do thou play the man*, act and ſpeak like a man. Some men have nothing but the outſide of a man. This is a good notion. For good men, holy men, men of divine excellency, are moſt quick-ſighted, and quick-ſented; Firſt, eſpying the appearances of God in any of his providences, and then making a due improvement of them. Therefore (ſaith *Elihu*) *magnifie his work, which men*, that is, holy and good men, *behold* and take notice of. *David* ſpeaking of the works of God in that notable place, (*Pſal* 92. 6.) ſaith, *A brutiſh man knoweth not, neither doth a fool underſtand this*; that is, ſuch a one as he, cannot behold the work of God. And therefore it is more than a criticiſme to reſtraine the word *men*, to men of this ſort; yet it muſt be granted that the word ſignifies not only excellent men, but any ſort of men, whether wiſe or fooliſh, rich or poor, and the weaker ſort of men more ſpecially than the ſtronger and more noble in any kind.

Quæ viderunt non hominos ſed viri præſtantes, ut ſit nomen ἀρετῆς. Sic alibi, in loco ubi non ſunt viri, virum te præſta. Druſi

אנשים

Non tam excellentes, quam miſeros et plebeios, vel omnes omnino homines ſignificat.

And to take the word in that univerſality, as compaſſing and comprehending all ſorts of men, even thoſe who are dim ſighted, blear-eyed, that is, of weakeſt underſtanding, may be a good improvement of the Text, implying, that as ſome of the works of God are ſo myſterious, that the wiſeſt cannot ſee the meaning of them, ſo many, very many, of his works are ſo manifeſt, that common men may compaſſe them. *Magnifie his works, which men behold.*

The works of God are of two ſorts, viſible and inviſible.

Firſt, Such as we ſee or know by ſight: Thus the works of

 Creation,

Creation, and the works of Providence, his preſent providences, are ſuch as we behold, they are viſible works.

Secondly, There are inviſible works of God, which we cannot behold, but muſt believe, and can know only by faith; ſuch are his ſpiritual works, or what he works upon or in the ſpirits of the children of men: Theſe are written in too ſmall a letter for the eye of Nature to behold; none can ſee them or behold them but by an eye of faith, or ſpiritual underſtanding. The works of regeneration and ſanctification (for which God is wonderfully to be magnified) may be ſeen or beheld in the fruits and effects of them, in thoſe they are very viſible, but they cannot be ſeen in themſelves. The paſt and future providences of God cannot now be ſeen by the eye, but by faith they may, and we ought to believe that ſuch things were wrought, and ſhall be wrought; we are to receive the teſtimony given by faithful Hiſtory, that ſuch things were done, though we never ſaw the doing of them, and we are to receive the ſure word of Prophecy that ſuch things ſhall be done, though we live not to ſee the doing of them. The work of God intended here by *Elihu* is a viſible work, therefore it muſt fall among his providences.

Verſ. 25. *Every man may ſee it.*

כל אדם *Omnes homines in quibus eſt vel mica bonæ mentis.* Merc:

That is, ſay ſome, every wiſe and underſtanding man; but rather, any man, (as was touched at the former verſe) if he be but a man of common underſtanding, if he have any ſpark of Reaſon left in him unquencht, if he have his eyes in his head, he may ſee it; the eye of every one who will not ſhut his eyes againſt the light, muſt needs ſee it. We ſay, *Who ſo blind as they that will not ſee.*

Man may behold it afar off.

שור חזה נבט

The word here tendred *Behold*, is not the ſame which we tranſlate *Behold* in the former verſe, nor is it the ſame word which ſignifieth to *ſee* in the former part of this verſe. Some make a difference between *ſeeing* in the former part of the verſe, and *Beholding* in the latter. Holy and good men ſee the works of God clearly and diſtinctly, they look on them with delight and contentment; the common ſort of men only behold them, firſt, darkly, as at a diſtance; ſecondly, confuſedly and in groſſe. *Man may behold it*

Afar

Afar off.

מרחוק *A Longe.* Mont: *Eminus*, i.e. *a formatione mundi huc uſq;* Rab: Solomoth. *Non planè perſpicit rationem ejus.* Piſc:

There is a four-fold conception about that *afar off.*

Firſt, Some expound it for *afar off in time.* The work of God doth not weare out; that firſt and great viſible work of Creation which was from the beginning, yet remaineth. Ages paſs away, but the work of God doth not paſs away, though done ſome hundreds, yea thouſands of years ago.

Secondly, *Afar off*, that is, imperfectly, not fully; he may have ſome diſcoveries of it, every man the weakeſt man may diſcern ſomewhat of it. Things that are high and afar off, are confuſedly ſeen, not clearly or fully diſcerned. A man that is afar off cannot be diſtinguiſhingly knowne. When a man is afar off, we may ſee him to be a man, but what manner of man he is, or who he is, we cannot diſcern; though poſſibly it may be our own father, yet being afar off we cannot know him diſtinctly. Thus to ſee afar off notes only a confuſed knowledge. That's a good ſenſe; things afar off are not diſtinctly ſeen.

Thirdly, *Afar off*, may be expounded of all the ſight we have on this ſide Heaven. In this world we ſee all that we ſee afar off, we have not a near intimate knowledge of things, eſpecially not of the beſt things, ſpiritual things, of all them we muſt ſay, *We know but in part, and ſee thorow a glaſſe darkly*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, (1 *Cor.* 13. 12.) Such things as are not immediate to us, we are ſaid to ſee thorow a glaſs, or as repreſented in their effects, and iſſues, or in their *back parts*, as God himſelf is ſeen. (*Exod.* 33. 18, 23.) *Thou ſhalt ſee my back parts: but my face ſhall not be ſeen*, ſaid God to *Moſes* when he moved to ſee his glory.

E longinquo, i.e. *ex poſteriori ſu et effectu.* Merc:

Fourthly, This beholding *afar off*, may note the greatneſs of the work of God, the exceeding lightſomneſs and glorioſneſs of it. Thoſe things that are great, may be ſeen a great way off. A high Tower is ſeen *afar off*. We hardly believe the doctrine and reports of Aſtronomers, how far off the Sun is, which every eye beholds. Though the Sun be ſo many thouſand miles diſtant, yet any man may ſee it, 'tis ſo great, ſo beautiful, ſo bright a body. Many of the works of God have ſuch a beauty, radiancy and luſter in them, that any that are not ſtark blind may ſee them afar off. *Remember that thou magnifie his work, which men behold.*

Every

Every man may see it, man may behold it afar off. From the context of these two verses, note,

First, *We are very apt to forget our duty in giving God the glory of his works.*

The *memento* or remember at the beginning of the verse is no more than needs. We have bad memories for any thing that's good, especially for the good word and the good works of God. We are so far from magnifying his work, that we often forget his work. 'Tis said of *Israel* (*Psal.* 106. 13.) *They soon forgat his works.* If we soon forget the works of God, we shall sooner forget to magnifie God for his work. Many remember the work of God, who do not magnifie it, nor him for it; but none can magnifie the work of God, nor God for his work, who do not remember it.

Secondly, In that the Text saith, *Remember that thou magnifie*, not only that thou speak of, or declare his work, but *magnifie it*,

Note;
We usually have low apprehensions of the work of God.

While we remember it, we do not magnifie it; while we speak of his work, we seldome praise his work. It is said of the vertuous Woman, (*Prov.* 31. 31.) *Her own works praise her in the Gates*; that is, they like so many Elegant Oratours tell all that pass by, how praise-worthy she is. The works of God will praise him, whether men do or no. *All thy works shall praise thee*, (saith *David*, Psal. 145. 10.) What then should they do for whom they are wrought? The latter part of the verse shews what they will do who know what God hath wrought for them; *Thy Saints* (saith he) *shall bless thee.* They who have (as most have) low thoughts, can never give high praises of the works of God.

Thirdly, In that this counsel and exhortion is given to *Job*, in that this spur is, as it were, put to his sides, *Remember that thou magnifie*,

Note;
The best men need monitours and remembrancers to quicken them about their duty of magnifying the works of God.

The Lord, though he needeth not, yet will have us to be his remembrancers, to do our works for us, if we would have our works done; the Lord would have us by prayer to mind him of our own, and of all his peoples condition (*Isa.* 62. 6.) *Ye that are the Lords remembrancers* (so we put in the Margine, and in the Text) *ye that make mention of the Lord*, &c. The Lord will have us to be his remembrancers. And though he is ever mindful of his Covenant, yet he liketh it well to be put in mind of it. But O what need have we of a remembrancer, to put us in mind of the work of God, and to magnifie his work! We need a dayly remembrancer to put us in mind of what we should do, how much more of what God hath done! We need to be minded of that which 'tis a wonder how we can forget, our latter end, or how frayle we are; how much more do we need to be minded of those duties which fit us for our latter end, and lead us to those enjoyments which never end!

Fourthly, Observe;
Such is the sinfulness of mans heart, and his sluggishness, that he hardly remembers to magnifie God for those works which he cannot but see.

Elihu urgeth *Job*, and with him all men, to remember that they magnifie even that work of his *which men behold*, and which every man may see. How slack are they in or to that great duty of magnifying God, who when they see, or may see, if they will, his mighty works, yet mind not the magnifying of him!

Fifthly, Observe;
Some works of providence are so plain, that every man, that doth not wilfully shut his eyes, may behold them.

He is altogether stupid and blockish, that seeth not what all may see. Hence the Psalmist, having said, *O Lord, how great are thy works*, concludeth such among brutes and fools, (*Psal.* 92. 6.) *The brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this.* It was the saying of *Plato* an Heathen; *That man is worthy his eyes should be pulled out of his head, who doth not lift them up on high, that he may admire the wisdome of the Creatour in the wonderfull fabrick of the world*; I may adde, *and in the works of providence:* Are they not such, that as the Prophet speaks, *He that runs may read them?*

Sixthly,

Sixthly, Conſider why doth *Elihu* thus charge it upon *Job*? ſurely to humble him for his ſin, in that he did not magnifie God for his works.

Hence Note;

It is a great aggravation of our neglect of praiſing God for his works, or of our not magnifying the works of God, ſeeing his works are obvious to every man, even to the weaker and ruder ſort of men.

If the very blind may ſee them, how ſinfully blind are they, who ſee them not! The works of God ſhould be ſought out, (*Pſal.* 111. 2, 4.) If they lie in corners, yet they are to be ſought out, and they are ſought out *of them that have pleaſure therein.* If God ſhould hide his work under ground, if God ſhould put his Candle under a buſhel (as Chriſt ſaith men do not, *Mat.* 5.) yet 'tis our duty to ſeek it out, and ſet it upon a Candleſtick, that all may behold it, and praiſe him for it. Now if the moſt hidden works of God muſt be ſought out, that they may be magnified, ſurely then, when the works of God ſtand forth and offer themſelves to our view, and we cannot tell which way to draw our eyes from them, how great a ſin is it, not to behold them, not to give him the glory of them.

Seventhly, Obſerve;

To magnifie the works of God is mans duty, yea it is a moſt neceſſary and indiſpenſible duty.

This is the poynt chiefly intended by *Elihu* in his preſent diſcourſe with *Job*; This containeth the ſum and ſubſtance of the whole Text. To magnifie the work of God is ſo neceſſary, ſo indiſpenſible a duty, that A *remember* is put upon it, leſt at any time it ſhould ſlip from us. The Lord knowing how great, how weighty, how comfortable, how profitable a duty it is to keep the *Reſt day*, prefixeth this word, *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*, (Exod. 20. 8.) I might give inſtance from ſeveral other Scriptures, importing thoſe duties which have a *memento* put upon them to be of great neceſſity, and that the Lord will not bear with us if we lay them by, or neglect the conſtant performance of them. To forget any duty is very ſinfull, how much more thoſe which we are ſpecially warned to remember that we do them!

David

David was not ſatisfied in doing the duty of the text alone, but muſt aſſociate others with him in it. (*Pſ.* 34. 3.) *O let us magnifie the Lord together*; that's a bleſſed conſort, the conſort of the bleſſed for ever. The whole work and reward too, of Saints in heaven is, and eternally will be, to magnify God; and they have the beginnings of that work and reward, who are ſincerely magnifying his work here on earth. *God hath magnified his word* (in all things) *above his name* (*Pſal.* 138. 2.) and the reaſon is, becauſe his workes anſwer or are the fulfilling of his word to the praiſe of his glorious name. Now if God hath magnified his word by his workes then we muſt magnifie his workes, or him in his workes, For wherein doth God magnifie his word but in his works? He hath magnified his work by bringing his word forth in his works: Surely then if God hath magnified his word by bringing it forth in his works, then 'tis our duty to magnifie the works of God, which are the product, effect and anſwer of his word.

But ſome may ſay, how is that done? I would give anſwer to this queſtion in five things.

Firſt, Then we magnifie the work of God, when we magnifie God for his work: we cannot magnifie the mercy of God, but by magnifying the God of our mercys; We cannot magnifie his work while we neglect himſelf. we magnifie God in his work, firſt, when we aſcribe the whole efficiency of what we ſee done in the world, to him, and ſay, *This is the finger of God*, Or when we ſay, according to this or that time, *What hath God wrought?* (*Numb.* 23. 23.) To magnifie the work of God is to give the whole of it to God. 'Tis the hand of God upon a work that ſets the price upon any work, and makes it worthy to be magnified. As in ſome Pictures, this ſets a price upon them, to ſay they are ſuch a mans work, the work of ſuch a famous Artiſt, the work of *Apelles*, or of *Michael Angelo*. So if we would magnifie any providential work, we muſt ſay, it is the work of the great God, it is he that hath done it; the eye of our mind muſt look directly at God in ruling and governing of the world. While we pore much upon, or ſtay our thoughts about ſecond cauſes, we cannot exalt the work of God; though we call it Gods work, yet if our hearts hang about ſecond cauſes, the work cannot be exalted as his. 'Tis a depreſſion of the work of God to put any thing of man upon it. To honour the work of God is to give him the

whole

whole effect of the work. As we then magnifie God when we look to him alone, with a ſingle eye, as the end of all our works (There is nothing doth magnifie God in what we do, but our looking to God as the end of all we do; Let our work be what it will, never ſo glittering, never ſo gay and glorious in the eye of the world, yet if it be not conſigned over to God, it is a baſe and pittiful work; if any man dedicates his work to himſelf he diſhonours his work: Now (I ſay) as it magnifieth our work when we make God the end of our work) ſo that which magnifieth Gods work, is, when we look upon him, not only as having an hand in it, but as being both the beginner and ender of it. If we take or give this to the creature, that is, ſit down in this or that Inſtrument, as the means by which we have attained our end, or as the end of what we have attained, we ſpoil the work as to God, or deſpoil God of his work. Remember, this, and this only, magnifieth our work, when we with a ſingle eye look to God as the author and as the end of it. Every work we ſee done is magnified, and God in it, when we look to God as the *Alpha and Omega, as the Author and Ender* of it. Nor is this true only in thoſe works of God which he doth more immediately, but where men act moſt, and are very inſtrumental. Let us therefore aſcribe every work to God, and that firſt, in afflicting us; ſuch an eye *Joſeph* had (*Gen.* 45. 8.) *It was not you that ſent me hither, but God*; that is, not ſo much you, as God (ſaith *Joſeph* to his brethren) I do not ſay it was you (though you were unkind brethren) it was not you that ſent me hither, but God: I look at him more than at you in that great affliction, which was brought upon me by your envy and unbrotherly unkindneſs towards me. Such an eye *David* had when he was under a very grievous, black, dark providence, when his ſon roſe up againſt him, and when his ſubject *Shimei* curſed him, even then he magnified that work of God, by aſcribing it wholly unto him (*2 Sam.* 16. 10.) *The Lord hath ſaid unto him, curſe David.* He magnified God in that great affliction by looking at the hand of God alone in it, and paſſing by *Shimei*'s, both undutifulneſs and extream malignity. He ſaid as much, while he tells us he ſaid nothing, in a like or as bad a caſe (*Pſal.* 39. 9.) *I opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it.* Hence that reproof in the Prophet (*Iſa.* 5. 12.) *They regard not the work of the Lord, nor conſider the operation of his hand.*

Second-

Secondly, Let us aſcribe every work to God in exalting us; ſuch an eye had the Church to God (*Pſal.* 44. 1,2,3.) *Our fathers have told us, what work thou didſt in their dayes*; Thou didſt drive out the heathen by thy hand, and plantedſt them, they got not the land in poſſeſſion by their own ſword, &c. but by thy right hand, and thine arm, &c. Here is no mention at all of *Joſhua*'s achievements and famous victories in ſubduing the *Canaanites*, &c. All is given to God, and he alone exalted for that exalting work. That's the firſt anſwer: Then we magnifie the work of God, when we acknowledge him alone both in afflicting and exalting us.

Secondly, Then we magnifie the work of God, when we beat out, as it were, and ſift all the circumſtances of his work (as we ſay) to the bran, that ſo we may find out every perfection, every glory of it: when we do not only behold and ſee the work, but when (as direction is given, *Pſ.* 48.) *We walk about Zion, tell her towers, and conſider her pallaces*, that is, when we do not look upon things only in the bulk, but make an exact ſcrutiny, or take a full view of every part. We cannot magnifie the work of God by a bare beholding of it, but by prying into every circumſtance of it, or by conſidering what excellencies and rarities are in it. As we magnifie our ſinful works (in one ſence we ſhould magnifie our ſins, that is, aggravate them, not magnifie them to applaud them, or glory in them, but to make our ſelves aſhamed of them, as (I ſay) we magnifie our ſinful works, or what we have done ſinfully, when we conſider all the circumſtances of our ſins, as committed againſt light and love, againſt mercy and goodneſs, againſt the patience and forbearance of God, againſt our own profeſſions and promiſes, againſt our experiences and priviledges, all which ſhould oblige us to holineſs, and engage us to a gracious circumſpection in all our wayes, and walkings, leſt at any time we ſhould ſin againſt God and grieve his Spirit: So we magnifie the works of God when we eye all the circumſtances of them, and conſider them as done for us when we could do nothing for our ſelves, as done for us when we muſt have periſhed and been undone, unleſs God had appeared for us; as done for us when we deſerved not the leaſt good to be done for us; as done for us when none would do any thing for us, none caring for our ſoules; as done for us when none could do any thing for us. Theſe and ſuch like

circumſtancial conſiderations, exceedingly magnifie the work of God. A bare *behold*, a tranſient *look* may diſcover no great matter, but if we ſeriouſly weigh every particular, we ſhall then ſee cauſe enough to magnifie the work of God. *Eliah* (1 *Kings* 18. 43.) commanded his ſervant to go look towards the ſea, and when he went firſt, he ſaw nothing, but being commanded to go ſeven times, he at the ſeventh *ſaw a little cloud riſing out of the ſea, as big as a mans hand*; but at the laſt, *heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.* If we would look again and again, if we would look ſeven times upon the work of God, that which at firſt ſeemed nothing, or afterwards no bigger than a mans hand, or no bigger than a mans hand could effect and bring about, will at laſt be magnified to ſuch a vaſtneſs, that all muſt confeſs, the hand of God hath done it.

Thirdly, We then magnifie the works of God, when we freely ſubmit to God in them, as juſt and righteous, when we accept and take them kindly at his hand, not only when they are outward kindneſſes, but croſſes. All the great words and rhetorick we can beſtow upon the works of God will not magnifie them, unleſs we freely ſubmit to them as juſt and righteous. They that would magnifie the works of God, muſt ſay, *Judgment and righteouſneſs are the habitation of his throne*, while they can ſee nothing but *Clouds and darkneſs round about him* (*Pſal.* 97. 2.) I (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) am in the dark about all that God is doing at this day, yet of this I am as confident as confidence it ſelf, *Judgment and Righteouſneſs are the habitation of his throne*; I know God doth nothing amiſs, no not in the leaſt. Thus *John* in the *Revelation* (*Chap.* 15. 3.) ſaw them that *had gotten the victory over the beaſt, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name*, and they (ſaith he) ſing the Song of *Moſes*, &c. *ſaying, great and marvelous are thy works, juſt and true are thy wayes.* The works of God in Judgment upon *Babylon*, are full of juſtice, and we magnifie them by proclaiming and crying them up as juſt; yea, the work of God in judgment upon *Zion*, is exceedingly magnified, when *Zion* ſubmits to it, and embraceth it as juſt and righteous. It was the great ſin of the houſe of *Iſrael*, when they ſaid (*Ezek.* 18 25.) *The wayes of God are not equal.* As if they had ſaid, are theſe the Lords equal dealings, that we his People ſhould be given up to the hand of the enemy, and ſuffer ſuch things, as theſe? yea,

yea, the houſe of *Iſrael* muſt ſay, all the works of God, not only his exalting works, but his humbling works, are equal, juſt and righteous, for we have ſinned. This is to magnifie the work of God.

Fourthly, To magnifie the work of God, is to look upon his work, what-ever it is, not only as having juſtice in it towards all men, but as good and being full of goodneſs to his People. Poſſibly it may be very hard work, yet we muſt bring our hearts to ſay it is good work, good to and for the *Iſrael* of God. Thus the holy man of old magnified the work of God (*Pſal.* 73. 1.) *Truly God is good to Iſrael.* This he ſpake while he was bemoaning himſelf under very afflicting providences. We magnifie the afflicting works of God, when we ſubmit to them as juſt, much more when we embrace them as good. And it was very much the deſign of *Eliha* to bring *Job* off from diſputing about the evils with which God had ſo long exerciſed him, to a ready yeeldance that they were good for him, and that in all the Lord intended nothing but his good.

Fifthly, To magnifie the work of God, is to anſwer the end of it. Every work is magnified when it receiveth its end; if a work be done, yet if it have not its effect, if it bring not that about to which it was deſigned, the worker receives no honour from it, nor is the work honoured. To work in vain, is a debaſing, a leſſening of any work, not a magnifying of it. The Apoſtle was afraid to beſtow his labour in preaching the Goſpel in vain. When people ſtill continue in their blindneſs and unbelief, &c. this layeth the preaching of the Goſpel low; but when ſouls are convinced and converted, and come flocking in, then the Goſpel is magnified, *and the word of the Lord glorified*, as the Apoſtle prayed it might (2 *Theſ.* 3. 1.) Now as the word of God is magnified when it attains its end, ſo the work of God is magnified when we give him, or come up to thoſe ends for which he wrought it: But if we let God loſe the end of his work, we do what we can to debaſe his work, as if he had done it in vain. We ſay, he works like a fool that hath not propoſed an end to every work he doth; and he appears not very wiſe, at leaſt not very powerful, who attaineth not the end or ends for which he began his work. The moſt wiſe God hath his end and aim in all his works in this world; and this is the honour we do his work, when we labour, firſt, to know, and ſecondly, to give him his end in every work.

But if any ask, What are the ends of God in his work?

I answer, They are very various.

First, The chief end of all that God doth, is the advancement of his own Name and Glory. As he made all things for himself in Creation, so he doth all things for himself in Providence. That which is the sin of man is the holiness of God, to seek himself. It is most proper for God, who is the chief good, and whose glory is the ultimate end of all things, to set up himself in all things (*Prov.* 16. 4.) *The Lord hath made all things for himself*, saith *Solomon*. And the Apostle saith as much (*Rom.* 11. 36.) *Of him and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever, Amen.* All things are of him, therefore all things should return unto him. If we would magnifie any work of God, we must be sure to give him this end, the glory of it. Let it not satisfie us, that we are advanced, or get up by the works of God, unless we our selves advance his glory by them. Many advance themselves, and are lifted up with pride, when God works for them or by them, not at all minding that which they should chiefly mind, the glorifying of God in & by what he hath wrought, either for themselves or others.

Secondly, God hath this in design, by all his works, to make us better. If it be a work of Judgment, it is to make us better, and then we exalt his works of Judgement, when we are bettered by them, when we are more humbled and weaned from the world by them. And as 'tis the design of God to make us better by his works of Judgment, so by all his works of mercy. The Apostle *beseecheth us by the mercies of God, to present our bodies* (that is, our whole selves) *a living sacrifice*, in all holy service to himself (*Rom.* 12. 1.) What will it advantage us to be bettered in our outward enjoyments, by what God works or doth for us, unless we learn to be better, and do his work better? that is, unless our hearts be more holy, and we more fruitful in every good word and work. Some will magnifie the work of God by keeping a day of thanksgiving, because they are richer or greater by what God hath wrought for them, who yet are not a whit more holy or spiritual by it. Woe to those who magnifie the work of God because they think it shall go better with them, when themselves are not better. Enquire therefore what lust hath the work of God moved you to mortifie, what grace hath the work of God put you upon the exercise of: They only indeed magnifie the work of God

God who have such workings towards God. It were better not receive a mercy, than not to be bettered by a mercy. It is not our crying up the works of God in our words, but in our works, which is the magnifying of them. It is more safe for us to say nothing of what God hath wrought for us, than to publish it, or make our boast of it, when we our selves do nothing worthy of it, in a way of condecency, and proportion to it. 'Tis the design of God in giving promises to make us *cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God* (2 *Cor.* 7. 1.) Much more having given us any great performances of his promises, doth he expect that we should be clean and holy. O then what a pittiful course do they take, who pretending to magnifie the works of God, do such things as are a defilement both to flesh and spirit!

A third design of God in working for us, is to make us trust him more, or, to be more in believing. 'Tis shewed (*Psal.* 78. 4.) what great things God did for the Jewish nation, and for their fathers; But what did God ayme at in all? we have the answer (*v.* 8.) *That they might set their hope in him, and not forget his workes.* The aim which God had in those great works, was that their hope might be set upon him; that they might trust in him more then ever they had done. The Lord, by the great works he doth, would gain upon our faith, or cause us to trust him for the future. How dishonorably do they carry it towards God, who believe not his word, much more they who believe not his workes, that is, who believe him not, notwithstanding his workes, as 'tis said of *Israel* (*Ps.* 78. 32.) *For all this they sinned still; and believed not his wondrous works.* The Psalmist doth not mean, that they did not believe such works had been done; but the meaning is, they did not trust God who had done those works. These and many more dutyes the Lord teacheth us by his word, and he teacheth them also by his workes, as it is said (*v.* 22.) *who teacheth like him?* The Lord teacheth us many excellent lessons by his works, if we had hearts to learn them. Lay these things together in practise, and they will be the best, yea, they are the only way of magnifying the works of God done for us. And, if the works of God are to be magnified all these wayes, then they fall short of this duty,

First, Who only make a report of the works of God, who tell the

the story of what he hath done, and so have done. As we ought to adorne the doctrine of God (*Tit.* 2.) so likewise the doings of God, or what God hath done, by our doings. Meer narratives about the work of God, is far below magnifying his work.

Secondly, They fail much more who extenuate and diminish the works of God, who obscure or eclipse his workes. As in our confessions of repentance, it is a sign of a bad heart barely to report our sins before God, without aggravating them in their sinfulnes; but in confession to extenuate our sin theweth a very rotten and naughty heart; so in our confessions of praise, meerly to report what God hath done for us, without putting an accent or a due emphasis upon his mercies, shews much coldnes of spirit in the duty; but to clip and lessen the workes of God, to hide and darken them, to abate and detract from them, shewes a base and a wicked spirit.

Thirdly, How do they fail in magnifying the workes of God, who do not only conceal how good they are, but bring up an ill report upon them, as those searchers did upon the land of *Canaan*. Those works and dispensations of God, which (like that land) flow with milk and honey, may be looked upon and censured by some, as good for nothing but to eat up and consume those that are under them.

Fourthly, They who are impatient under any work of God, who murmur and repine at it, are far from magnifying the work of God.

Fifthly, They are far from magnifying the work of God, who think themselves so wise that they could mend the work of God; had they the pensel in their hand they would make fairer work of it: what hudling is here? think some; what confusion is here? say others; what sad work is here? saith a third. If we had the ordering of things what an orderly world would we make, if we had the ordering of things (as God hath) we would quickly cure and remedy all these disorders. Though such formal speeches be not uttered, yet such things are spoken in parables, the actions of some tell us such are their thoughts, as if they could mend the work of God, and govern the world with greater moderation than is; though indeed we need not scruple to call the wisest man in the world a very dotard, if he thinks so, or that any thing can be done more equally than God hath done it. Let all flesh

flesh adore, let none presume to question the work of God; let God alone with his work, as he will have no controler, so he needs no counseller. Remember, tis mans duty to *magnifie his work*, not to mend it, to shew how good it is, not to attempt the making of it better. And indeed as it is the highest poynt of presumption, so of ignorance, to meddle with the mending of it. *The Lord is a Rock* (saith *Moses*, *Deut.* 32. 4.) *and his work is perfect*. Who but a fool, or who but by the over-working of his own folly would venture to mend that which is already, not only perfected, but perfect, were it only the work of a man, much more when it is the work of God, the only wise God?

And that we may be provoked humbly to magnify, and for ever deterred from that proud attempt of finding fault with, or mending the work of God, consider these three things;

First, Take the argument in the text, the plainnes of the work of God, it is such as may be seen afar off, none can pretend ignorance of it, or if they do, that's a vain covert, or excuse; every man may see it, man may behold it afar off, as most worthy to be magnified.

Secondly, If we do not magnifie the work of God, God will lessen his own works of mercy and favour toward us.

Thirdly, He will do no more for us if we magnifie not what he hath done. It is said (*Matth.* 13. 58.) Christ *did not many mighty works there, because of their unbeleif*. God will do no more mighty works for them, who refuse or neglect to pay him a tribute of praise and glory for what he hath done.

JOB,

JOB, Chap. 36. Verſ. 26.

26. ***Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be ſearched out.***

ELihu having called upon *Job* to magnifie the work of God in general, proceeds to draw him to the magnifying of the ſpecial works of God in naturals: Yet before he leads him to the conſideration of the greatneſs of thoſe works, he invites him to conſider God himſelf who is the Author and Diſpoſer of them, and he invites him to conſider God in three things, all which we find laid down in this 26th verſe.

Firſt, In his Greatneſs; *Behold God is great.*

Secondly, In his Incomprehenſibleneſs; *He is great, and we know him not.*

Thirdly, In his Eternity; *Neither can the number of his years be ſearched out.*

Surely he is moſt worthy our conſideration who is great, and ſo great that he cannot be comprehended, and who is eternally great, whoſe years are numberleſs.

Verſ. 26. *Behold God is great.*

The word *Behold*, is here a note both of Attention and admiration; O mind, O admire the greatneſs of God. *God is great.* The word rendred *great*, properly ſignifies an encreaſing growing greatneſs; God is without all encreaſe or growth, being for ever the ſame, yet he may be ſaid to encreaſe, to be magnified and multiplied (as I may ſay) according to the apprehenſions which we have of him. This word bears the ſignification both of *much* and *many*. *God is but one and the one-moſt one*, yet (in this ſence) *many*. So the *Septuagint* renders it here, *he hath, or is many*, that is, he hath all perfections in him; the lines of all excellency and virtue, of all glory and perfection, center in God alone. Thus God is *much*, and God is *many*; the one God is many, he hath many, he hath all eminencies and excellencies bound up, boundleſly in him.

שגיא *Et multus, & magnus, multus robore.* Druſ. *Septuaginta legunt multus, i. e. omnibus numeris perfectus, atque omnibus perfectionibus cumulatus.*

Again, *God is great*, in himſelf or in his being. Whatſoever is in God is God, and therefore whatſoever is in God is great. The power

power of God is the powerful God, and therefore his power muſt needs be great: the wiſdom of God is the wiſe God, and therefore his wiſdom muſt needs be very great; the mercy of God is the merciful God, and therefore his mercy muſt needs be very great: And thus we may proceed in our meditations quite through all the divine Attributes.

And as God is great in his being, ſo he is great in his working, he *doth great things*. The Pſalmiſt ſaith, *he is good, and doth good*; he is alſo *great, and doth great things*; he is the firſt, the chief, and the beſt being, and his doings are ſuch as he is, he doth like himſelf. God is great, and he hath *an excellent, an excelling greatneſs*. *Praiſe him* (ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* 150. 2.) *according to his excellent greatneſs*; or as the words may well bear, according to his *muchneſs of greatneſs*; for when the Scripture ſaith, *God is great*, this poſitive is to be taken as a ſuperlative, *God is great*, that is, he is greateſt, he is greater than all, ſo great that all perſons and all things are little, yea, nothing before him (*Iſa.* 40. 15.) *Behold the nations are (to him but) as the drop of the bucket, and are counted but as the ſmal duſt of the ballance: behold, he taketh up the Iſles as a very little thing, they are as nothing, and they are counted to him as leſs than nothing and vanity.* How great is God in compariſon of whom the greateſt things are little things, yea, the greateſt things are nothing!

Behold, God is great. From this excellent Attribute, *the greatneſs of God*, I have made ſeveral Inferences already, at the 12th verſe of the 33d chapter; yet I ſhall infer ſome things further here, both for our direction and conſolation.

Firſt, If God be great and greateſt, *then fear him greatly*. *Great is the Lord* (ſaid *David*, in his thankſgiving-ſong, 1 *Chron.* 16. 25.) *he alſo is to be feared above all gods*; that is, above all the great powers on earth, and above all the imaginary powers of heaven. Idols, who are the fancied powers of heaven, are ſometimes called gods in Scripture; ſo likewiſe are Princes or Magiſtrates, who are real powers on earth. Now, ſaith *David* (who was one of thoſe gods, and a great one) *fear him above all gods*: Why? Becauſe he is above all gods, he is higher than the higheſt and he is greater than the greateſt; therefore fear him above all gods, yea, therefore *fear, or worſhip him all ye gods* (*Pſal.* 97. 7.) Many ſay with their mouthes, God is great, yea, infinitely greater than

than man, yet they fear men, eſpecially great men, more than God.

Secondly, If God be great, *then love him greatly*. Shall this great God have but little love from us? The Law of love, with reſpect to God, is expreſt two wayes in Scripture; firſt, as to the truth of it; and ſecondly, as to the meaſure or degree of it. The Love which is given to God muſt be a true love, a ſincere love, yet not only ſo, but the love which is given to God muſt be the greateſt love; *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy might, and with all thy ſtrength*; with all thy heart ſincerely, with all thy might and ſtrength greatly.

Thirdly, If God be great, *then ſerve him greatly*, or do him great ſervice. Take heed of offering the lean and the lame, the halt and the blind to this great King. A great King muſt not be put off with little ſervices with ſmall pittances of duty.

Fourthly, If God be great, then *believe him greatly*; let us have great faith in the great God. Jeſus Chriſt rebukes his diſciples (*Mat.* 8. 26.) *O ye of little faith*; have you God to pitch your faith upon, who is great? have you his power, and his mercy, and his truth, and his faithfulneſs, all which are great, to reſt upon? and have you but a little faith? That woman (*Mat.* 15. 28.) gave glory to God in believing, when ſhe believed greatly; and therefore Chriſt cryeth up and magnifyeth the greatneſs of her faith, *O woman, great is thy faith.*

Fifthly, *The great God is greatly to be praiſed*; he doth great things for us, therefore we muſt return great thanks to him. That alſo we have expreſly (1 *Chron.* 16. 25.) *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praiſed.* The great God muſt have great praiſes, for he doth great things. As every ſin we commit againſt God hath a greatneſs in it upon this conſideration, becauſe he is a great God againſt whom we ſin (Take heed of the leaſt ſin, for that is great, being committed againſt the great God) ſo whatſoever duty (this of praiſe eſpecially) we perform to God, we ſhould ſtrive to raiſe it up to the greateſt, to the higheſt, becauſe the great God, the high God is concerned in it, or it is conſigned to the great, to the high God.

Sixthly, If God be great, *we ought to give him great ſubmiſſion*, or to ſubmit greatly to him. Great ſubmiſſion to God is the ſubſtance

ſtance of all duty to God. We owe the full ſubmiſſion of our wills to the Will of God in a twofold reſpect. Firſt, to whatſoever he willeth us to do, or to his commanding will. Secondly, to whatſoever he will do with us, or to his diſpoſing Will. In theſe, and in all things, let us ſtrive to guide all the actings of our ſouls towards God, becauſe he is great.

Secondly, If God be great, then we may infer for conſolation.

Firſt, Be not diſcouraged in prayer when you have great things to ask, when your wants are great, and your neceſſities urgent, when you muſt have great ſupplies, when ſmall matters will not ſerve your turn (In many caſes, it is not a little help, it is not a ſmall matter which will do the thing which we ſue unto God for) now here is a mighty ground of comfort for us, if we want great things, we have a great God to go unto; and how great ſoever our wants are, they are all but ſmall to the greatneſs of that God unto whom we go (*Epheſ.* 3. 20.) *He is able to do exceeding abundantly above what we aſk or think*; and not only above what we actually ask and think, but indeed, beyond what poſſibly we can ask or think, above what we are able to ask or think. Therefore let us never be diſcouraged in prayer, becauſe of the greatneſs of the things that we have to ask of God.

Secondly, Be not diſcouraged, though as your wants, ſo your dangers and your troubles are great. How great ſoever the danger is you would be delivered from, God is greater, to whom you come for deliverance: And therefore when a great Mountain ſtood in the way of the deliverance of the people of God (*Zech.* 4. 7.) the Prophet ſpeaks in this language, *Who art thou? O great Mountain, thou ſhalt become a Plain before Zerubbabel*; that is, before the power of that God in whom *Zerubbabel* truſts and whoſe work *Zerubbabel* carries on. Hence that holy confidence (*Pſal.* 66. 3.) *Through the greatneſs of thy power, thine enemies ſhall ſubmit themſelves to thee*, or, *they ſhall yeild feigned obedience*, as we put in the margin, which ſome render thus, *through the greatneſs of thy power, thine enemies ſhall be found liars.* All the readings magnifie the greatneſs of God. Through the greatneſs of thy power thine enemies, the enemies of thy people, ſhall ſubmit, they ſhall be found liars, they ſhall yeild feigned obedience, they ſhall not be able with all their greatneſs to ſtand it out againſt the great

God. Therefore be not discouraged at any time at the greatness of danger. *Though you walk through the very valley of the shadow of death* (that's to be in the greatest danger) yet as *David* did not, so do not you fear, no not that great danger, while the great God is with you.

Thirdly, *Be not discouraged though your sins are great when you come to ask the pardon of them.* As the greatness of sin puts a very great damp upon the spirit of man in asking pardon, so the greatness of God should take off that damp. *My thoughts are not your thoughts* (saith the Lord *Isa.* 55. 7,8,9.) in this matter. There is nothing wherein God doth more exceed man than in pardoning sin (*Mic.* 7. 18.) If sin be great, the mercy of God is great too, infinitely greater than the sin of man; if sin be great, remember we have *a great high Priest* (*Heb.* 4. 14.) not only a Priest, but a high Priest, and a great high Priest; therefore fear not to ask the pardon, even of the greatest sin, in his name and for his sake. And this is true if we respect either national or personall sins; it may encourage us in asking pardon for nations, how great soever their sins are. *Moses*, when the People had greatly sinned against God, had recourse to this (*Numb.* 14. 18, 19.) *The Lord is of great mercy; pardon I beseech thee the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy, as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now.* Do thus also with respect to personal sins. *David* made the greatness of his personal sin an argument to go to God for mercy (*Psal.* 25. 11.) *Pardon my sin, O Lord, for it is great.* He was so far from being disheartened by the greatness of his sin, to ask the pardon of it, that (according to our reading) he had great hope of pardon, as well as saw he had great need of pardon; and all because he knew God was great in mercy. Or, if we read that text thus, *Pardon my sin, O Lord, though it be great*, the sense is much the same; for as the former makes the greatness of his sin a reason provoking him to hasten unto God for pardon (as great diseases hasten us in seeking remedies) so the latter shews that the greatness of sin is no stop to the mercy and free grace of God in Christ, for the pardon of it. Christ in that Parable (*Mat.* 18. 24.) gives instance of the greatest debt; he tells us of one that owed his Lord *ten thousand talents*, a vast sum, a very vast sum; a talent being, according to the lowest computation, three hundred pounds of money; ten

ten thousand times three hundred pounds is a huge sum; so that here was a great debt, now (saith the text) *When the debtor had nothing to pay, he came to his Lord, or Creditor, and he forgave him all.* He did not say, wouldest thou have me, or can I, forgive such a debt as this? What, ten thousand talents? He forgave it as if it had been a debt of two mites. Thus, and many other wayes we may improve this first Attribute of God, mentioned in the text, *his greatness*, both as to our direction in duty, and consolation in every extreamity. *Behold God is great*,

And we know him not.

That's the second thing. The words are plain, but the sense is difficult; for it may be objected, Do not we know God? *Elihu* said but just now, in the very verse before the text, *Magnifie his works which men behold, every man may see it, man may behold it afar off*? Surely if the works of God may be known and seen by every one, God himself may be known, for he is known in his works, as the Apostle argues (*Rom.* 1. 20.) The things which he hath made make him known: how is this then said, *That God is great and we know him not*? Doth not the Prophet in denouncing that dreadful curse (*Jer.* 10. 25.) *Poure out thy wrath upon the heathen that know thee not*, thereby intimate, that all the people of God know him? Doth not Christ tell us (*John* 17. 3.) *This is eternal life, to know thee the onely true God.* They who have eternal life, must have the knowledge of the true God. But all true believers have eternal life already in hope, and shall have it shortly in hand, therefore they know God. The Promise of the New Covenant is (*Heb.* 11.) *They shall all know me from the least to the greatest*; that is, all my Covenant-people shall know me. How is it then said, *God is great, and we know him not*? When *Paul* was at *Athens*, he found an Altar with that Inscription, *To the unknown God* (*Act.* 17, 23.) They worshipped a God whom they knew not, but certainly we must know whom we worship. *Ye worship ye know not what*, was Christ's reproof of the *Samaritans* (John 4. 22.) *We know what we worship*; that is, whom we worship.

For answer to this, when the text saith, *God is great and we know him not*; we may say, First, That even heathens, the untaught, untutored, and uncatechized heathens do, or, may know

God;

God, that is, they may know him in some degree or other, they may, yea, they do know him (as the Apostle saith, *Rom.* 1.20.) so far as to leave them *without excuse*; they have no plea, nor can they make any apologie for themselves. Secondly, 'Tis certain, all believers, I mean all true believers, know God savingly, or so far as is sufficient for their salvation. Every believer knows God. There is no faith in God without the knowledge of God. Thirdly, Which shall be the point of Observation from this part, as well as an answer to the question;

None know God fully, perfectly, comprehensively.

That's *Elihu's* meaning when he saith, *God is great, and we know him not*; that is, we know not how great he is, or we know not the utmost of his greatness. God only knoweth himself fully and comprehensively. There is no proportion between the greatness of God and the understanding of a man. The greatness of God is infinite, the understanding of a man is but finite and limited; the deepest understanding among men, yea, the understanding of Angels is but shallow, compared with God. Thus we are to understand this text, *God is great, and we know him not.* There is a greatness in every thing of God, transcending the possibility of any created understanding. This some give for the reason, why the Seraphims spoken of (*Isa.* 6.) are said *with two of their wings to cover their faces*, they were not able to bear the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. For, though Christ, in that admonition which he gave, to take heed of offending *and despising* the little ones, gives this reason for it. (*Mat.* 18. 10.) *For in heaven there Angels do alwayes behold the face of my Father which is in heaven*; though (I say) it be a truth, that the holy Angels, and blessed Saints above, do alwayes behold the face of God, yet neither Saints nor Angels, not the Saints in glory, nor the glorious Angels, can fully comprehend the greatness and majesty of God; and therefore the Prophet (as was said) represented the Angels covering their faces with their wings. We have heard of King *Hiero* putting the question to *Simonides*, a Philosopher, *What God was*, who desired (not being able to give a sudden answer) that the King would respit him till next day; when next day came he desired a second, and when that came he desired a third; and still the more he searched, the farther he was from finding his answer. This is true; not only of Philosophers, who see but by the dark light of Nature, but of those who are enlightened divinely, or from above, they who receive much light from God, cannot comprehend the light of God; the more they search into it, the more they see themselves short of it. The most we know of God is not so much as the least part of that which we know not of him; and when we know as much of God as is knowable by man, yet it may be said, as in the text, *God is great, and we know him not.*

Hence take three brief Corolaries or Deductions.

First, If God be great and *we know him not*, that is, we are not able to comprehend him; then we must rest satisfied with what God hath manifested of himself and of his will. God hath manifested himself these four wayes. First, In his Word. Secondly, In his works of Creation and Providence. Thirdly, In his Son. Fourthly, By his Spirit. These wayes God is pleased to manifest himself, or make himself known unto his People; now what knowledge of God can be gathered up in these wayes, what can be learned of him out of his word, out of his works, by considering him in his Son, and by waiting for the help of his blessed Spirit, we must labour to take in; but take heed of a bold pressing into the secrets of God, or of a curious prying into the nature of God, which indeed will but dazle our eyes, and the more we think or look into it, the blinder we shall be.

Secondly, If God be so great that we know him not, *Then we ought not presumptuously to enquire into a reason of the works and wayes of God*; for that which is true of God himself, is true of his works and of his wayes, we cannot know them in the sence opened: Therefore the Apostle speaking about that wonderful dispensation of God, the laying aside of the *Jewes* and calling of the *Gentiles* (*Rom.* 11. 33.) cryeth out, *O the depth of the knowledge and wisdom of God! how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his wayes past finding out!* As God himself cannot be fully known, so neither can his wayes nor works.

Thirdly, If God cannot be fully known, neither in himself, nor in his works, *Then take heed of murmuring or complaining of the wayes, works, and dealings of God.* Will you find fault with that which you neither do, nor can fully know? how little is it of any of the works of God, that we know! how little a way do we see

ſee into them! let us not find fault with that thing, the perfections whereof we cannot find out; ſay not, why is it thus? why doth God let things go thus? why are his providences ordered thus? there are many ſuch queryings in the hearts of men, and ſome ſuch are expreſt by the tongues of men. But remember the Lord cannot be known in his works, therefore let us not complain of his works, but, ſitting down in ſilence, ſubmit to them; let us (as *David*) *Be dumb becauſe God hath done it*, (Pſal. 39. 9.) *David* was ſilent, not only with reſpect to the ſoveraignty of God, who, he knew, had power and liberty to do whatſoever he pleaſed, but with reſpect to his incomprehenſibility, becauſe he knew he was not able to know or underſtand the bottome-reaſon of that which God had done. This ſome conceive, the ſpecial intendment of *Elihu* in this Text, as reproving *Job* for his many complaints, and murmurings, and diſputings about the dealings of God with him in the extremity of his ſufferings: Therefore, ſaid he, *Conſider God is great, and we know him not.*

Yet let none be diſcouraged in ſeeking after the knowledge of God, becauſe 'tis told us we cannot know God; yea let no man think to excuſe himſelf in his neglect of purſuing the knowledge of God, becauſe this Text ſaith we cannot know him. Some poſſibly will ſay, If God be ſo great, that we cannot know him, then why ſhould we labour after the knowledge of God? or we hope this will excuſe us, if we do not know him, ſeeing we cannot. Take heed of ſuch reaſonings; for though God cannot be known to the utmoſt of what himſelf is, yet God may be known ſo far as is needfull for us, and that is very far. We may know God ſo far as concerns our duty to him, and our happineſs by him; we may know God ſo far as to honour him, and to enjoy him: and we muſt labour to know him perfectly, though we cannot. The Apoſtle ſpeaking of the love of God (*Eph.* 3. 17.) would have us *labour to comprehend with all Saints, the heighth, the bredth, the depth, the length, and to know the love of Chriſt that paſſeth knowledge.* That the love of Chriſt paſſeth knowledge, that it exceeds our underſtanding, ſhould not diſcourage us from labouring to know it; nor will it excuſe any that ſit down idly, and do not ſtudy the knowledge of God, though he paſſeth knowledge; we muſt labour to know the greatneſs of Gods love, and the greatneſs of Gods wiſdome, and the greatneſs of Gods power, though the greatneſs of God in all theſe is greater than our narrow hearts can comprehend. *Behold, God is great, and we know him not,*

Neither can the number of his years be ſearched out.

The Text is, *Number of his years, no ſearch*; that is, as we well tranſlate it, *the number of his years is ſuch as cannot be ſearched*, we ſay, *ſearched out*; it is but one word in the Hebrew, properly ſignifying, *to ſearch a thing to the bottome*, that we may find out the utmoſt of it. *The number of Gods years cannot thus be ſearched out*, we cannot find them to the bottome. *Elihu* ſpeaks of God after the manner of men; years properly belong to man, and the things here below of this world: the life of man, and the continuance of the creature, are meaſured by houres, and dayes, and weeks, and months, and years, as theſe are meaſured by the motion of the Heavens. But God is far above any ſuch rule or meaſure of life, or of his being, all theſe meaſures are improper unto God; there's no meaſuring him by houres, dayes, weeks, months or years, or ages. The word which we tranſlate *years*, ſignifieth *changes*. Years are changed or returned; there is a returne of the ſame time every year, Spring and Summer, and Autumn and Winter; thus the year chargeth, and turnes about continually. God is infinitely above all theſe changes and turnings of time (*Pſal.* 102. 25, 26, 27.) *The heavens wax old, and as a veſture thou ſhalt change them, and they ſhall be changed, but thou art the ſame, and thy years fayle not.* The years of God are not like the years of the world, which wear it out, and change it as a veſture, is changed by time; the Lord is for ever the ſame. Thus one of the Ancients gloſſeth thoſe words of the Pſalme, *Thy years fayle not: Thy years* (ſaith he) *neither go nor come; thy years ſtand all together, for becauſe they ſtand, they that go are not excluded by them that come; thy years are one day, and thy day is not day by day, but to day; thy to day doth not give place to to-morrow, nor doth it ſucceed to yeſterday; thy to day is eternity, therefore thou haſt begot thy co-eternal, to whom thou ſaideſt, to day have I begotten thee.* So then this expreſſion, *Neither can the number of his years be ſearched out*, is, according to our apprehenſion and underſtanding, a deſcription not only of very old age, but of eternity. We would think that man very old, the houres, yea the minutes of whoſe life could not be ſearched out by a good Arithmetician.

Numerus annorum ejus, et non eſt inveſtigatio.

Annus apud Hebræos (שנה) *ex ſua proprietate et Etymologia nomen habet a mutatione, quaſi diverſitatem ſignificet. Ab hac ergo vice veſtes dicuntur* שנים, *nam murmur vocantur: et unum idem quod vertitur* (1 Reg. 14. 4.)

Auguſtinus in Pſal. 102. ℣. 26.

 truth

much more eaſily may we tell how many years the oldeſt man hath lived: What then ſhall we think of him the number of whoſe years cannot be ſearched out? this can ſpeak nothing leſs than everlaſtingneſs. And this eternity or everlaſtingneſs of God, though it be impartible, yet it hath, I may ſay, a double reſpect: Firſt, to what went before; Secondly, to what is to come. The eternity of God is ſuch as cannot be ſearched out, either as to what is paſt, or to what is to come; indeed unto God there is nothing paſt or to come; for eternity, properly taken, is an *everlaſting Now*, it is not that which paſſeth or moveth away; and therefore ſome of the Ancients elegantly deſcribe eternity, *to be the perfect enjoyment of bleſſed life all at once*; which becauſe it is all at once together and perfect, cannot be altered nor leſſned. In eternity that which is paſt is preſent, yea that which is to come is preſent in an eternal bleſſed life. 'Tis ſo with God, and ſo in proportion with all thoſe who are entred into eternity, whatſoever they have had is always preſent with them, nor are they in the expectation of any thing to come; they enjoy all in every moment, without the want of any thing. 'Tis much more ſo with God; though years have ſucceſſion, yet the years of God have no ſucceſſion of times or things.

Æternitas tempora omnia ſine ulla ſucceſſione complectit.

Æternitas eſt vitæ beatæ tota ſimul et perfecta poſſeſſio. Boetius.

Æternum eſt unum eſſe, et totum ſimul eſſe, et nihil deeſſe. Greg. l. 16. Moral. c. 21.

Æternum eſt immutabile et totum impartibiliter. Dionyſ: cap. 10. de divinis Nomin:

Further, The eternity of God, which lies under this deſcription, *The Number of his years cannot be ſearched out*, is not a particular attribute of God, but that which diffuſeth it ſelf through all his attributes; he is eternall in all; there is no ſearching out the Number of the years of any of the perfections of God; his Wiſdome is eternal, and his Power is eternal, and his Goodneſs is eternal, and his Juſtice is eternal; there is no ſearching out *the Number of the years of God* in any of theſe perfections.

Hence Note;

God is an eternal being;

His years come not under account, or number. God is eternal, not only without end, as created Spirits are, but without beginning, which no creature is, nor can be; He is eternal, not only without end or beginning, but without ſucceſſion or mutation. Some of the Ancients tell us, *Eternity ſtands faſt, but moves all other things*. The eternal God is the firſt Mover, himſelf being immoveable. If ſo, then

—*Stabiliſq; manens dat cunſta moveri.* Boet: de Conſol: Metro. 9.

First,

First, *All things are always preſent with or before God*: Things paſt, things to come are preſent with God, he were not eternal elſe. In that eternity or eternal eſtate of glory which believers ſhall at laſt arive unto, even they ſhall enjoy all at once, becauſe all their enjoyments ſhall be in God, or God ſhall be their whole enjoyment.

Secondly, *God is infinitely happy and bleſſed*. He hath all that ever he had, or that ever he can have, all at once, or already, nothing of his bleſſedneſs is either to come to him or gone from him; therefore he muſt needs be infinitely bleſſed. Here in this world ſome men have had a kind of bleſſedneſs, they have been rich and great, they have been in power, they have had their fill of pleaſure, but now they have it not, all is periſhed and gone and paſt away. There are others in expectation of great matters, of great riches, of great honours, of great contentments in this world, but as yet they have them not; we ſay of many, *Their lands are not come into their hands*, their eſtate is but yet in reverſion and expectation. Thus it is with men; ſome have had it, and it is gone, and others though they may have it, yet it is not come. But now with the Lord all is preſent, and therefore how infinitely happy is he! A man would think himſelf very happy if he could have all the contentments that ever he had ſcattered through the ſeveral dayes and years of his life gathered into one moment; it is thus with God, and thus in proportion it ſhall be with us, when we come to that bleſſed ſtate of eternity.

Thirdly, If God be eternall, if there be no ſearching out of his years, then

Time is in the diſpoſe and ordering of God. He *that inhabiteth eternity, is the Lord of time*. God is ſaid to *inhabite eternity*, (*Iſa.* 57. 15.) that is, he is eternall, and therefore he is the diſpoſer of all times; he that made time will order time: he ordereth time as to perſons, and he orders time as to Nations, he orders times, and all the changes of times, he ordereth, not only the duration of time, but the condition of times; all is from him, whoſe years cannot be ſearched out. *David* ſaid (*Pſal.* 31. 15.) *My times are in thy hands*, that is, my perſonal times in all the changes of them, troubleſome or comfortable, joyfull or ſorrowfull, are ordered at thy will, by thy power and wiſdome. And with reſpect to Nations *Daniel* ſaid (*Chap* 2. 21.) *He changeth times*

and ſeaſons. The Lord puts a new face of things upon States and Kingdomes; what changes hath not, cannot the Lord make among the ſons of men? The reaſon of all is, he is eternall.

Fourthly, If there be no ſearching out the number of the years of God, if he be eternall, then

How ought we to reverence and adore God! We have a Command from God to reverence thoſe who have attained many years in this world, which alaſs are very few, none at all to the years of God; the aged, the gray-headed muſt be reverenced, (*Lev.* 19. 32.) And one reaſon of that Law may be, becauſe the aged have ſome ſhadow of Gods eternity upon them; they who have many years have ſome reſemblance of him, the number of whoſe years cannot be ſearched out; therefore God will have them reverenced. Now if the ancient are to be reverenced, how much more God himſelf, who is called (*Dan.* 7. 9.) *The ancient of dayes!*

Fifthly, If God be eternall, then, *we may truſt him, yea therefore we ought to truſt him,* (Pſal. 74. 12.) *Thou art my King of old, commanding deliverances.* O how did *Davids* confidence ariſe upon this, that God who was King of old, is King now, and will be King for ever, (*Pſal.* 10. 16.) *The Lord is King for ever and ever; the Heathen are periſhed out of his Land,* that is, they ſhall ſurely periſh. God will not alwayes bear with evill men in his Land; For if becauſe God was King of all the Lands, he therefore drave the old Heathen out of *Canaan*, and planted his people there; doubtleſs, if they who bear the name of his people there, live ſo like the old Heathen that they may be called Heathen, he will alſo cauſe them to periſh out of his Land, and all becauſe *he is King for ever and ever,* and therefore can do it at one time as well as at another, and now as eaſily as at any time heretofore. *Truſt in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength,* (Iſa. 26. 4.) *David* a Great Prince makes it an argument to draw off our truſt from men, from the greateſt men, from Princes, becauſe they are not for ever, (*Pſal.* 146. 3, 4.) *Truſt not in Princes, nor in any Children of men*; why not? many reaſons may be given why not; but the only reaſon there given is their frailty, and the conſequents of it; *His breath goeth forth,* &c. As if he had ſaid, Suppoſe Princes are never ſo good, and juſt, and gracious in the exerciſe of their Power, yet truſt not in them, for

for they die, *their breath goeth forth, and then all their thoughts periſh:* all the reall purpoſes which they had, as alſo the promiſes which they made for your good, die with them, and can do you no good: The number of their years may be ſearched out, and run out, their years are not for ever. Now the contrary of that which is an argument uſed by the Spirit of God to draw off our truſt from the gods here on Earth, is an argument to draw on and engage our truſt ſtrongly to the God of Heaven; *His breath goeth not forth, none, not one of his thoughts ſhall periſh*; therefore truſt in him.

Sixthly, If there be no ſearching out the number of the years of God, then, *Be not troubled if God ſeem to ſtay and not to do the work which you expect this or that year:* If God doth it not this year, he hath another year to do it in, there is no ſearching out the number of his years. We may ſay of any man if he doth not his work this year, he may be gone before the next: but if God doth not his work this year, he may do it next year, or two or ten years hence; he hath time enough, even all time before him: therefore the Prophet, having ſaid (*Hab.* 2. 3.) *The viſion is for an appointed time, but at the end it ſhall ſpeak and not lie,* preſently adds, *Though it tarry, wait for it:* As if he had ſaid, The Lord who hath all times and ſeaſons in his power, will do his work in the beſt time and ſeaſon, he will do what he hath promiſed, when it is moſt fit to be done; if he doth it not at the time when we expect, yet let us wait, he is the Maſter of time. God who is eternal, cannot be ſcanted of time, *The number of his years cannot be ſearched out.* 'Tis a known maxime among the wiſe men of the world, *Take time, and you may do any thing.* What cannot God do, who knoweth all times, and can take what time he will!

Seventhly, Which followeth upon the former, *God will carry on his deſignes through all the world:* He will carry them through, againſt all, (*Pſal.* 92. 8, 9.) *Thou Lord art moſt high for evermore; Lo, thine enemies ſhall periſh*; thine enemies who would hinder thy work, they ſhall certainly fall. Chriſt is called *The firſt and the laſt*; *He* (ſaith St *John*, Rev. 1. 17.) *laid his right hand upon me, and ſaid, fear not, I am the firſt and the laſt:* Why ſhould he not fear? what did Chriſt offer to cure him of his fear? Chriſt doth not give him a bare diſſwaſive, *Fear not,* but a rational

rational ground why he ſhould not fear. Fear will not be blown away with a breath : Our paſſions are never truly quieted nor attempered but by reaſon. Upon what ground then would Chriſt take off *Johns* fear, even upon this in the Text, *I am the firſt and the laſt*. As if he had ſaid, *John* why doeſt thou fear? knoweſt thou not who I am, what a Lord and Maſter thou ſerveſt? Why, *John*, I tell thee, I am *the firſt and the laſt* ; and therefore thou mayeſt be ſure, I will do my work, and none ſhall lett me. *John* had wonderfull things in viſion; ſhall all theſe be done thought he? yea, ſaith Chriſt, *Fear not*, I will carry on my deſignes (all the deſignes that Chriſt had in the world were then in viſion) Eternity triumphs over all difficulties ; The Eternall will ſee the laſt man born, (as we ſay) he will have the laſt word, and the laſt blow. *I am the firſt and the laſt*.

Laſtly, From this Conſideration of God, let us take a proſpect of our ſelves, what poor ſhort-lived ſhort-breathed Creatures we are. There is no ſearching out the number of the years of God, but we may quickly ſearch out the number of our own years ; our life is but a ſpan long, (*Pſal.* 39. 5.) yea our age is nothing before God. Did we conſider the eternity of God, what ſhould we judge of our ſpan-long life? we are ſaid to be of *yeſterday*. Some expreſſe man thus; *He is yeſterday* ; as if he were not to day, but were already paſt while he is. The beſt that can be ſaid of him is this ; he is *but of yeſterday*, and poſſibly he ſhall not have a to morrow : but the Lord is for ever and ever the ſame.

And though we are ſhort-lived as to this world, though our years may ſoon be told over, yet let us remember that God hath called us to the participation of eternity ; though we have not the eternity of God, which is without beginning, yet we ſhall have an eternity from God without end; every man is everlaſting as to his ſoul. The godly ſhall be bleſſed for ever ; and there is an eternal eſtate of wo and miſery to the wicked, the number of the years of their ſorrows and ſufferings, who live and die without Chriſt, cannot be ſearched out. The number of the years of the joy and bleſſedneſs, and reſt and happineſs, and tranquility of thoſe that believe, of thoſe that are faithfull, of thoſe that are godly, of thoſe that walk with and fear God, I ſay the number of the years of their joy and happineſs cannot be ſearched out neither. No man can number or tell how long-laſting the felicity of Saints

Saints ſhall be. As the number of the years of God cannot at all be ſearched out, ſo he hath given man as to his future eſtate a numberleſs number of years : And it were well if we who enjoy this life, and are dying every moment, would often conſider there is a life coming which will never die, the number of our years alſo in that ſenſe cannot be ſearched out.

The thoughts of eternity ſhould ſwallow up all our time ; yet alaſs, how doth time, or the things which are but temporary, ſwallow up, in moſt men, the thoughts of eternity! What-ever we do in time, ſhould be to fit us for eternity ; yet alaſs, moſt uſe their time ſo, as if they did not believe, or at leaſt hoped, there would not be, any ſuch thing as eternity. Did we but ſpend two or three minutes of time every day in the ſerious remembrance of our eternal eſtate, it would be an effectual means, to make us both holy in and contented with what-ever temporal eſtate we meet with in this world. We ſhould be earneſtly ſearching after God all our dayes, did we conſider what it imports to us, *that the number of his years cannot be ſearched out*.

Thus *Elihu* labours to draw *Job* to the conſideration of God himſelf, who is the Author of thoſe great providential works, both of thoſe he had ſpoken of before, the works of providence, ordering men here in civils, as alſo of thoſe works of providence in natural things, of which he comes to treat largely, both in the latter part of this Chapter, and in moſt of the next. Where we ſhall find *Elihu* giving us as it were a Syſteme, or body of natural Philoſophy in his diſcourſe about the wonderfull works of God, which he is calling *Job* to conſider.

JOB,

JOB, Chap. 36. Verſ. 27, 28.

27. *For he maketh ſmall the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof;*
28. *Which the clouds do drop, and diſtill upon man abundantly.*

ELlihu having ſhewed the greatneſs of God himſelf, in the former verſe, proceeds to ſhew the greatneſs of his works; he had done it before as to Civil Adminiſtrations, and the ordering of humane affaires, in caſting down and lifting up the ſons of men; he doth it now in natural things, or in ordering the motions of nature, ſtill in reference unto man. He deſcribes the greatneſs of the works of God aloft or above in the Aire and in the Clouds, as he had before deſcribed the greatneſs of his works here below on the Earth.

The whole remainder of *Elihu's* ſpeech in this Chapter and to the end of the 37th, is ſpent in a philoſophical diſcourſe about the Meteors, and thoſe various operations and changes that are wrought in the Aire; he diſcourſeth of Rain, of Thunder and Lightning, of Snow and Winds; from all which works of God in Nature, *Elihu* would convince *Job* of the Juſtice and Righteouſneſs of God (as well as of his power) which was his chief purpoſe. He begins this philoſophical Lecture or Lecture of divine Philoſophy with the Rain, in the two verſes now read; and he mingles much of that matter in this and the following Chapter. He ſpeaks here, I ſay, of the Rain, which is a diſpenſation of God uſually both very profitable & comfortable; what more profitable or more comfortable than the rain? It is alſo a diſpenſation of God ſometimes very dreadfull and hurtfull: The Lord ſends the very ſame Creature upon contrary ſervices, ſometimes for good, ſometimes for evill; at one time as a bleſſing, and at another as a curſe, to the inhabitants of the earth.

What *Elihu* ſpeaks of the Rain in this Chapter, may be reduced to five heads.

Firſt, He ſheweth the manner of it's formation and generation, *v.* 27, 28.

Secondly,

Secondly, The vaſtneſs or huge extent of the veſſels containing it, which are the clouds of the aire, ſpreading themſelves all the Heavens over, *v.* 29.

Thirdly, He tells us of the ſudden changes and ſucceſſions of rain and faire weather, of a cloudy and ſerene sky, *v.* 30.

Fourthly, He ſets forth the different purpoſes of God in diſpenſing the rain, which are ſometimes for judgement, ſometimes for mercy, *v.* 31, 32.

Fifthly, He intimates the Prognoſticks of it, or what are the ſignes and forerunners or foretellers of it, *v.* 33.

The two verſes under-hand, hold out the firſt poynt, the formation and generation of the rain.

Verſ. 27. *He maketh ſmall the drops of water.*

That is, God (as it were) coynes and mints out the water into drops of rain: As a mighty maſſe of gold or ſilver is minted out into ſmall pieces, ſo a huge body of water is minted out into ſmall drops; that's the ſum of theſe words according to our rendring. The Hebrew word rendred, *He maketh ſmall*, hath a two-fold ſignification, and that hath cauſed a three-fold tranſlation of theſe words.

Firſt, It ſignifieth *to take away*, or, *to withdraw*; according to this ſignification of the word, a two-fold power of God is held forth about the drops of water.

נדש *ademit, ſubſtraxit.*

Firſt, The power of God in drawing the water up from the Earth to make rain, for that in Nature (as we ſhall ſee afterwards) is the cauſe of rain; God draws up the water from the Earth, which he ſends down upon the Earth: he draws up the vapours, and the vapours become a Cloud, and the Cloud is diſſolved into rain.

Subſtraxit deus ſtillas aquarum, ſcilicet mari, fluminibus et locis humidis, quæ fundunt pluviam ad nubem ejus. Hauſtus vapor ex aqua cogitur in nubem, quæ deinde fundit pluviam. Merl: *Qui auſert ſtillas pluviæ.* Vulg.

Secondly, The word may very well expreſſe, according to other texts of Scripture, the putting forth of the power of God in ſtopping, ſtaying, keeping back and with-holding rain from the earth; when God hath drawn water from the earth, he can hold it from the earth as long as he pleaſeth. The *Chaldee* Paraphraſe ſaith, *He forbids the drops to water the earth*, or *he ſends forth a prohibition to the clouds that they give no water.* The vulgar Latine ſpeaks to the ſame ſence, *who takes away drops of rain*, that is, *from the earth.* Mr. *Broughton* renders, *he withdraws*

 dropping

dropping of water. In this ſence I find the word rendred expreſly (*Numb.* 9. 7.) where certain perſons are brought in by *Moſes* thus complaining, *Wherefore are we kept back that we may not offer an offering to the Lord with the children of Iſrael?* It is a caſe; there were ſome, it ſeems, ſuſpended from bringing their offerings to the Lord, and they demand a reaſon of it; to give which, *Moſes* ſaith, *ſtand ſtill, and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you.* But I quote that ſcripture only for the force of the word, *wherefore are we kept back, or with-held*, which was for ſome uncleanneſs. Thus you have the firſt ſignification of the word, and a double tranſlation upon it, both very pertinent to the nature of the rain, and the Lords dealing with man in it, which is the ſubject *Elihu* is inſiſting upon.

נרע *Minuit, diminuit.*

Secondly, The original word ſignifies to diminiſh, or leſſen, or make a thing ſmall; ſo 'tis rendred (*Exod.* 5. 8.) when the children of *Iſrael* complained that they were oppreſſed in making brick. This commandement came from *Pharaoh*, *The tale of bricks which they did make heretofore, you ſhall lay upon them, you ſhall not diminiſh ought of it.* It is this word. Again (*Deut.* 4. 2.) *Ye ſhall not add to the word which I command you, neither ſhall you diminiſh ought from it.* Man muſt not make the word of God ſmaller or greater than it is. 'Tis high preſumption to uſe either ſubtraction from, or addition to the word of God. Thus alſo the word is uſed in the caſe of ſecond or double marriages (*Exod.* 21. 10.) *If he take him another wife, her food* (that is the food of the firſt wife) *her raiment, and her duty of marriage ſhall he not diminiſh.*

Our tranſlators take up this ſenſe of the word as noting the diminiſhing of a thing in the quantity of it. *He maketh ſmall the drops of water*, or, *he makes the water fall in ſmall drops*; whereas if the water were left to it ſelf, it would poure down like a ſea, or like a flood to ſweep all away. This is the work of God, and though it be a common, yet it is a wonderful work; *He maketh ſmall the drops of rain.* A drop is a ſmall thing, and therefore the Prophet when he would ſhew what a ſmall thing, or indeed, what a nothing man is, yea, all the nations of the earth are to God, ſaith (*Iſa.* 40. 15.) *The nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the ſmall duſt of the ballance. Behold, he taketh up the Iſles as a very little thing.* The Spirit of God pitcheth

eth upon this compariſon, when he would ſet forth that great diſtance between God and man. Man is but a drop to God. But are not all drops ſmall? why then doth he ſay, *He maketh ſmall the drops?* The reaſon is becauſe, though all drops are ſmall, yet ſome drops are ſmaller than others, and we read of great drops in the Goſpel Hiſtory of Chriſts agony in the Garden, which was an immediate ſuffering in his ſoul, from the hand of his Father, preſſing him with that weight of wrath, which was due for our ſins (*Luke* 22. 44.) *He ſweat, as it were, great drops of blood.* As God made Chriſt ſweat great drops of blood for our ſins, ſo he makes the Clouds to ſweat ſmall drops of water for our comfort. *He maketh ſmall*

The drops of rain.

נטף *Guttavit, guttatim fluxit.*

The Verb of this Subſtantive is uſed (*Joel* 3. 18.) *In thoſe dayes it ſhall come to paſs, that the mountaines ſhall drop down new wine*; by which we are to underſtand, the plentiful effuſion of the Spirit promiſed in the latter dayes. *David* deſcribing the Lords glorious march thorow the wilderneſs, ſaith (*Pſal.* 68. 8, 9.) *The earth ſhook, the heavens alſo dropped at the preſence of the Lord; thou, O God, didſt ſend a plentiful rain, whereby thou didſt confirm thine inheritance when it was weary.* Which Scripture principally intends the ſpiritual rain, which drops down upon believers, and refreſheth their wearied ſouls: And therefore by a Metaphor, this phraſe, to *drop*, ſignifies, to propheſie or preach the word of God; becauſe that, like rain, falls ſilently, and as it were in drops upon the hearers, it falls in at the ear, and ſoaks down to the heart, it ſoaks quite thorow, as *Moſes* ſpake (*Deut.* 32. 2.) *My doctrine ſhall drop as the rain, and my ſpeech ſhall deſtil as the dew.* And as the word is uſed in Propheſies of mercy and inſtruction, ſo of judgment and deſolation. Thus the Lord charged his Prophet (*Ezek.* 20. 46.) *Son of man, ſet thy face towards the ſouth, and drop thy words towards the ſouth, and propheſie againſt the foreſt of the ſouth field.* Again (*Ezek.* 21. 2.) *Son of man, ſet thy face towards Jeruſalem, and drop thy words towards the holy place, and propheſie againſt the land of Iſrael.* Once more (*Amos* 7. 16.) *Drop not thy word againſt the houſe of Iſaac.* So that, I ſay, this dropping is uſed frequently, as in a natural, ſo in a ſpiritual ſence. *He maketh ſmall the drops*

....Subinde Præceptum auriculis hoc inſtillare memento. Horat. Lib. 1. Ep. 8.

Of water.

מים *Forma duali, ſignificantur aquæ duplices.*

The word is of the *Dual* Number in the Hebrew, and ſo it ſignifies both ſorts of water; the waters of heaven, and the waters of the earth, the upper and the nether waters, the upper waters in the Clouds, and the nether waters in the Springs. We find them ſpoken of together in the firſt of *Geneſis* at the 7th *verſe*; *God divided the waters which were under the firmament, from the waters which were above the firmament.* We find the upper waters ſpoken of ſingly (*Pſal.* 104. 3.) *Who layeſt the beams of the chambers in the waters*; Chambers are above. And in the firſt of *Geneſis* at the 9th *verſe*, we find the lower waters alone; *Let the waters be gathered together under the heavens.* Under-heaven waters are the lower waters. One of the Rabbies renders the words thus; *He multiplieth the drops of rain*; and the reaſon of it is (which falls in with our tranſlation) becauſe the leſs any one thing is made, the more is the general maſs, out of which it is made, multiplied.

Rabbi Selo. *exponit*, ירבה *per multiplicat, quia dum ita guttatim aquæ decidunt multiplicantur.* Merc.

From the words thus far opened, we may note ſomewhat for our inſtruction.

Taking the former ſignification of the words, *He draweth up the drops of water*,

Obſerve;

The ordinary rain which watereth the earth, is firſt fetched from the earth.

Pluvia eſt vapor calidus & humidus ex aquis dulcibus humido virtute Solis & Stellarum, uſque ad mediam aëris regionem elevatus, & ibi propter loci frigiditatem in nubem condenſatus, &c. Marc. de Meteorol. part 2. cap. 25.

God raiſeth vapours from the earth, and then watereth the earth with them. All the rain which falls upon the earth was raiſed from the earth. If I were to anſwer that queſtion in nature, *What is Rain?* I might reſolve it thus; *Rain is the moiſture of the earth, drawn up by the heat of the Sun, into the middle Region of the Air, which being there condenſed into clouds, is afterwards at the will of God, diſſolved, and drops down again in ſhowers.* The Clouds, at the command of God, hold faſt, and at his command they break and let out their waters upon the earth. This is, as was touch't before, a very ordinary, yet a very admirable work of God. As in ſpirituals, all thoſe acts of grace in faith, and love, and joy, *&c.* by which our hearts and ſouls are carried up to heaven, come firſt from heaven; ſo that rain which comes down upon us from heaven, was firſt fetched from among us by the mighty power of God. Rain, according to natural Philoſophy, is thus generated: The water and moiſture of the earth being attenuated by the heat of the Sun-beams, become vapours, which being ſo rariſied and reſolved into an airy ſubſtance, are by the ſame heat of the Sun drawn up to the middle region of the air, where being again condenſed or thickened into water, they melt down into rain, at the appointment of God.

We may conſider rain briefly in all the cauſes of it; Thus:

Firſt, The efficient cauſe of rain is God.

Secondly, The inſtrumental cauſe is the heat of the Sun.

Thirdly, The material cauſe is the moiſture of the Sea and watery Land.

Fourthly, The final cauſe of it, is, 1. Supream; the glory of God. 2. Subordinate; and that threefold. Firſt, the benefit. Secondly, the puniſhment. Thirdly, the inſtruction of man.

Secondly, From that other ſignification of the word, as it notes withdrawing or keeping back, upon which ſome inſiſt much,

Obſerve;

God when he pleaſeth can with-hold the water or the rain.

He can give a ſtop to the rain, and then the clouds yeeld us no more water than a ſtone; *He with-holds the drops of water.* The Lord threateneth the Vineyard with this ſtop (*Iſa.* 5. 6.) *I will command the clouds, that they rain no rain upon it*; which is true of a natural and proper Vineyard, and of proper natural rain, though it be meant there of the people of God, whom he metaphorically, or improperly, calleth his Vineyard; and the rain there intended, is the rain of inſtruction uſually falling upon them. Now as God doth often forbid the ſhowers of the word, that they fall no more upon a people, as he ſends forth a prohibition to ſtop the ſpiritual rain; ſo he alſo ſtops and prohibits the natural rain (*Amos* 4. 7, 8.) *I have with-holden the rain from you, when there was yet three moneths to the harveſt; and I cauſed it to rain upon one city, and cauſed it not to rain upon another city; one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered: ſo two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water, but were not ſatisfied.* Thus in caſe of diſobedience to his divine Law,

Law, the Lord threatened to stop the common Law of nature, and to *make the heavens brass, and the earth iron* (*Deut.* 28. 23.) And when the heavens are brass, that is, when they yeeld no more moisture than brass, then the earth is as iron, that is, it yeelds no more food for the sustentation of man or beast, than a bar of iron doth. Such stops the Lord hath often put upon the courses of nature, and can do again when he pleaseth; though I believe he never did, nor ever will do so, but when highly displeased and provoked by the sin of man.

Take two or three inferences from it.

First, *If the rain or drops of water come not in their season, let us acknowledge the hand of God.* 'It is God that hath lockt up the clouds when-ever they are lockt up; God hath forbidden the clouds to let down their rain when-ever they with-hold it. Men and Devils can no more stop the rain than make it.

Secondly, *When we want rain, let us go to God for it.* 'Tis the prerogative of God alone to help us in that streight; and therefore the holy prophet sends a chalenge to all other powers, or declares them disabled for this help (*Jer.* 14. 22.) *Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain, or can the heavens give showers?* neither the one nor the other can. The heavens cannot dispose of a drop, though they possesse a sea of water. God must *hear the heaven, before the heavens can hear the earth*, that is, answer the necessities of the earth. And as the heavens cannot give man rain, so neither can the gods of mans making and placing there, such are all the vanities or vain Idols of the Gentiles. The prophet having shewed us that these cannot, sheweth us who can give rain in the next words, *Art not thou he, O Lord, our God* (surely thou art he) *therefore we will wait upon thee, for thou hast made all these things. Solomon*, at the dedication of the Temple, puts this as one special case wherein they were to apply to God by prayer (1 *Kings* 8. 35.) *When heaven is shut up and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee, If they pray*, &c. *then hear thou in heaven.* The prophet sends the people in that exigent to God (*Zec.* 10 1.) *Ask ye of the Lord rain, in the time of the later rain.* As if he had said, if ye would have rain you must ask for it, and be sure ye ask it of none but him; *ask of the Lord.* As it is God that gives out or with-holds the rain, so he gives it out or with-holds it at the voice of prayer. The Apostle saith of *Elias* (*Jam.* 5. 17.) *he was a man subject*

subject to the like passions that we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth, by the space of three years and six months; and he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain. At his word the Lord stopt rain, and at his word he gave rain. Let us therefore confess that God is the author or father of the rain; *He causeth vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth, he maketh lightnings for the rain* (*Ps.* 135. 7.) *He covereth the heaven with clouds, he prepareth rain for the earth* (*Ps.* 147. 8.) God covereth the heaven with clouds, by drawing up vapours from the earth, which are the matter of these clouds, and in those clouds he prepares the rain, & by the rain sent down makes the grass to grow upon the mountains. The encrease of vegetables is the effect of rain; God hath the rain in his power, and to acknowledge him in it is our duty. *'Tis a great part of our spiritualness to acknowledge God in naturals as well as spirituals*; or, that the key of the clouds, as well as the key of the heart, is in the hand of God, and in his only. One of the Ancients speaking to this point, said, *Let us not ascribe rain to the Saints, much less to Witches.* Papists have their Saints to whom they pray for rain, and Atheists go to Witches for rain. The modest and moderate Heathen will rise up against such in judgement; they ascribed rain to their gods though false gods; they had Epethites or Titles of Honour for their Idols, testifying their faith in them and dependance upon them for the showers of heaven, they called them *shower-bringing gods*, and *fair-weather-making gods*. If heathens would yet ascribe the rain to their gods, not to men, not to any inferiour powers, how abominable are they, who professing the knowledge of *Jehovah*, the only true God, do not acknowledg him alone in this! In times of drought many will say, We hope we shall have rain when *the Moon changeth*, or, when the *Wind turns*; now though there be somewhat in nature, both in the change of the Moon and turn of the Winds, as to the change of weather, yet to speak much of, or expect any thing from either, argues some withdrawing of the heart from God; and God to shew the folly of such, hath often with-held the rain, though the Moon hath changed more than once, and the Wind turned to all quarters, and passed through all poynts of the Compass.

Deus sibi Soli clavem pluviæ reservat Targ. Hierosol. in cap. 3. Gen.

Imbriferi, serenatores.

Thirdly, *Let us take heed of provoking the Lord; he can quickly stop our Comforts, those common outward comforts*, the rain and

showrs

showrs of heaven, and then (as to this Life) in how sad a case are we! As the Lord hath not *left himself without witness* (namely of his goodness) *in sending rain and fruitful seasons*, so he can quickly leave a witness of his Justice, and displeasure, or of his just displeasure, by with-holding rain and (as a consequent of that) fruitful seasons from us. Were it only to have rain and fruitful seasons, we should take heed of displeasing God. If a man had such power as to with-hold rain from your land, you would take heed of displeasing him. How dangerous then is it to provoke God, who cannot only with-hold the rain from your land, but can, as the Scripture saith, make the rain of your land *to be powder and dust* (*Deut.* 28. 24.) that is, give you powder and dust instead of rain! When the rain is long with-holden the earth grows hard, and being much trodden or traveled on, dusty; this dust being raised up by the wind, shall come down instead of rain, or that's all the rain which I will give you. The Lord hath our natural comforts in his hand, as well as our spiritual and eternal.

Further, As this with-holding of the rain sometimes, so the holding up of the rain at any time, shews the great power of God; to hold the water in the aire is the work of God as much as to with-hold it from the earth. The water is a heavy body, and all heavy things tend downward; is it not a wonder that such a mighty weight of water should hang in the aire, and be there held up? if it were not held there, it would not stay there, but come down and drown all. What holds it up? the Cloud is a thin substance, yet it holds the water as well as the strongest vessel bound with hoopes of iron; But by what power? doubtless by the power of God. The water hath no consistence in it self, it is a fluid slippery body, now what can hold the water that none of it leakes out, but the power of God? There are many millions of drops in one little cloud, and every drop is of it self ready to slip away, yet the whole cloud yeelds no more water then a rock till God orders it. Let us contemplate the Almightiness of God, who can hold such a mighty body of water in the aire, or who (as *Job* spake, *Chap.* 26. 8.) *bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them.*

These notes arise from that translation, which imports the Lords power in drawing the water from the earth, as also in with-holding it from the earth when there is need, and in holding it when there is no need.

We

We translate, *He maketh small the drops of water.* Not only hath God made the body of the water, which is one of the four general Elements, of which all bodies are compounded and made, but he makes the water into *small drops, or maketh small the drops of water.*

Hence note;

That the water falls from heaven by drops, comes to pass by the especial power, wisdom and goodness of God.

The water, if left to it self, would fall whole like a sea upon us, or like a mighty floud, in such quantities as would, instead of refreshing, overwhelm the earth. When God drowned the world, it is said (*Gen.* 7. 11.) *The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows (or flood-gates) of heaven were opened.* We are not to imagine that heaven hath windows or flood-gates; but God did not put forth his mighty power to make small the drops of rain, but let it come all at once: those waters which were before bound up in the clouds, by the decree of God, were now, by his decree, let loose in a wonderful manner and measure, and came down, not in drops, but in streames and spouts; the clouds did not (as formerly) distil their burden, but ease themselves of it at once, or altogether. Rain ordinarily (as sweat through the Pores of the skin) passeth by degrees through the Pores of the Clouds, yet God can let it out all at once. Sea-men, who take long Voyages, tell us, they meet with spouts of water, endangering great ships. So then, this *making small the drops of water*, is to be ascribed to a threefold Attribute of God.

Pluvia in nubibus, velut in linteo continetur, atque in illa velut compressi guttatim distillatur.

First, It is a work of his power, nor is it done without a kind of Miracle, that the water comes down, as it were, through a sive, or watering-pot.

Secondly, It is a work of divine wisdom. The Lord knowing that the earth cannot digest huge portions of water at once, divides it into little portions, that the earth may gradually receive and let it soak into its bosom, for the feeding of Plants, and the supply of all creatures that live upon it.

Thirdly, 'Tis a work also of divine Goodness; for if God did not make small the drops of water, if it should come down whole it would drown the earth, instead of comforting and fattening it. Behold then, the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God *in making small the drops of water!*

Though Philoſophers have attempted to find out and aſſigne a reaſon in Nature, about this falling of the rain in drops, yet they have not fully attained the reaſon why, nor the manner how, God doth this; we muſt aſcribe it chiefly to the power, wiſdome, and goodneſs of God, in ordering it for the benefit of man, yea of all living creatures. And ſurely *Elihu* leads us to conſider the wonders of thoſe things which are common and naturall, to convince us, that foraſmuch as we cannot clearly ſee the reaſon of thoſe leſſer things, we ſhould take heed of prying into greater and remoter ſecrets; and he would have *Job* particularly know, that ſeeing he could not find out the way of God in theſe natural things, much leſs could he find out the way and whole deſigne of God in thoſe his providential dealings with him: *He maketh ſmall the drops of water*; and then as it followeth in this verſe,

Plane admirabilem et tremendum in illis et per illa foſe exhibet deus. Merc:

They pour down rain according to the vapour thereof.

Though the water be made into ſmall drops, yet he doth not ſay, they drop down, but *they pour down rain*; that is, the drops fall plentifully; that frequent expreſſion, in Scripture, *of pouring down*, every where implyeth plenty or abundance. The promiſe of *pouring out the Spirit in the latter dayes*, notes the abundance of the Spirit that ſhall then be given. The word ſignifies alſo to *ſtraine*, implying that the rain is contained in the Clouds, as it were in a linnen cloath, which being preſſed, diſtills the water in ſmall ſtreams or drops, as it were through a ſtrainer. *They pour down*

זקק *fundit, fundendo purgavit active, item percolatus excolatus, defæcatus fuit. Imber, nimbus pluvia.*

Rain.

There are three words in the Latine, the firſt of which notes a ſhowre or gentle rain; the ſecond, a ſtormy or fierce rain; the third, rain in generall. Rain, in this place, may be taken in all or either of theſe notions, for at one time or other the Clouds pour down drops into all ſorts of rain Rain (as I ſaid) is made of vapours drawn up, and here he ſaith, *They pour down rain*

מטר *pluvia, hinc* המטיר *verbum tranſitivum in Hiphil ſignificat, fecit pluere, quo certe innuitur deum eſſe authorem pluviæ.* Fagius in Gen:

According to the vapour thereof.

There are two ſorts of vapours; there are dry vapours, and moiſt vapours; dry vapours (ſay Naturaliſts) are the matter of the wind, and the moiſt are the matter of the rain; Now ſaith *Elihu*, the

they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof; that is, look in what proportion the Sun draweth the vapours into the Aire, in that proportion doth the rain fall upon the Earth; or, in the ſame proportion that the vapour is drawn up, in that proportion is the rain let down.

Pluviæ quaſi fluviæ, eo q ad fluant. Iſidor. *Quæ fundunt pluviam poſt nebulam ejus.* Piſc:

Some render the word which we tranſlate *vapour, a cloud*, that is, after the water is drawn up into a Cloud, it pours down rain proportionably. Another tranſlation renders it, *Affliction* or *trouble*, and give the whole verſe thus; *He draweth up the drops of water, which poured down rain to their Calamity.* This the learned Author applyeth particularly to the Flood in *Noahs* time; but I ſhall not ſtay upon that. Our reading is clear; *They pour down rain according to the vapour thereof*; that is, in the ſame proportion that vapours come up, the rain falls down.

אד *ſignificat vaporem et nubem, ſignificet etiam calamitatem; hinc verſus ita vertitur, nam ſubtrahit ſtillas aquarum, quæ fundebant pluviam ad calamitatem ejus.* Jun:

Firſt, In that, as the rain is made of the vapour, ſo according to the vapour, or in proportion to the vapour, ſuch are the ſhowres of rain; Note;

According to what is naturally received, returns are naturally made.

And if the Clouds of Heaven return to man naturally according to that they receive from the Earth; how is man on earth bound morally, or in duty, to return according to what he receives from Heaven. Let us mind our *accordings and proportions* to the dealings and diſpenſations of God. The Clouds of the aire will condemn us, at leaſt witneſs againſt us, if we receive much, and return little. I paſſe this. Only here we may take notice of ſix things in Concatination one with another: Firſt, vapours are drawn up from the Earth: Secondly, they are made into watery Clouds: Thirdly, from thence they are ſent back to moiſten the Earth: Fourthly, the rain ſent down is proportionable to the vapour that went up: Fifthly, according to that proportion, the Earth is made more or leſſe fruitfull; plentifull rains cauſe or produce plentifull fruits ordinarily from the Earth, and little rains little fruits: Sixthly, and laſtly, man is nouriſhed and hath his outward Comforts encreaſed or leſſened in proportion to the fruits which the Earth bringeth forth, or to the fruitfulneſs of the Earth. All theſe things attend and depend upon one another. *They pour down according to the vapour thereof*, and God draws up in

in proportion to what himſelf purpoſeth they ſhall pour down. Thus we ſee, how God by the Sun draws out the moiſture and ſap of the Earth, to return it back with advantage. Drawing up the moiſture makes the Earth languiſh, and her fruits wither; ſending it down again, makes the Earth green, flouriſhing and fruitful. *They powr down rain*, &c. And what more? *Elihu* anſwers

Verſ. 28. *Which the Clouds do drop.*

שחקים *nunc Cælum, nunc nubes denotat, a tenuiſſima earum Subſtantia.* Druſ.

Here he ſpeaks more expreſly, and tells us more clearly than before, what the vapours are made up into, *According to the vapour thereof, which the Clouds do drop.* As Clouds are made of vapours, ſo they are the receptacles or veſſels of rain, which they hold (as was ſhewed before) as long as God pleaſeth, and when he gives the word, then they *drop*

And diſtill upon man abundantly.

That's another elegant word, implying the manner in which the rain comes or falls, it is as by a diſtillation. Here alſo 'tis expreſſed for whoſe uſe or ſake principally the rain is ſent. *The Clouds* (ſaith the Text) *drop and diſtill upon man*, yet we know men get themſelves out of the rain as ſoon and as faſt as they can. The rain falls upon the earth, and abides there; yet 'tis ſaid to diſtil upon man, becauſe the rain diſtils at mans requeſt, and for mans ſake: That other creatures are cheriſhed by the rain, is not for themſelves, but for man, as man is not cheriſhed and maintained by thoſe creatures for himſelf, but for God. As the rain diſtills chiefly for the glory of God, ſo nextly for the relief and comfort of man; and for man it *diſtills*

Abundantly.

שלי אדם רב *Super hominem multum, vel ſuper homines affluenter, ut* רב *ſit adverbium, quod eũ minus ſe probat mihi, quia Rab. hic ſcribitur cum Camets.* Druſ.

There is a double reading of this word: Some take it as an Adjective to the Subſtantive *man*, rendring thus, *it diſtills upon many men*; we take it adverbially, *Which diſtill upon man plentifully*, that is, in great plenty upon man. We may take in both readings without ſtrain to the Text, or departure from the matter in hand. For as the rain falls or *diſtills upon man abundantly*, ſo upon abundance of men; the rain, we know, falls ſometimes very plentifully, and at times, or one time or other all the world over, watering every mans ground, and ſerving every mans turn or occaſions. Therefore *Elihu* expreſſeth the bleſſing fully when he ſaith, *The Clouds diſtill upon man abundantly, or upon abundance of men.*

Hence Note, Firſt;

The Lord hath rain enough in ſtore;

He hath veſſels plentifully filled for the watering of the Earth; and, *The Lord is ſo free in his diſpenſation of the rain*, that as he gives it to many in number, ſo to many in kind, he maketh his rain to fall, (as well as his Sun to ſhine) *upon the juſt, and on the unjuſt*, (*Math.* 5. 45.) It ſhews the exceeding goodneſs, as well as the bounty of God, that the evill partake of his benefits as well as the good.

And, for our further improvement of this bounty of God, remember, that if God be ſo abundant and liberall in bleſſings to us, we ought in proportion to abound in duty towards him, or (as the Apoſtle exhorts, 1 *Cor.* 15. 58.) we ſhould be *ſtedfaſt and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.* Some do only a little, (I may ſay) only here a ſtitch and there a ſtitch of work for God, but we ſhould abound in it; and that not only now and then by fits, but be alwayes fixed in it, eſpecially we ſhould do ſo, with reſpect to that, which the rain is a Symbol of, the word of God. When God drops and diſtills the rain of Goſpel truths and holy ſoul-ſaving inſtructions abundantly upon us, how ſhould we abound in every good word and work! It was propheſied of Chriſt (*Pſal.* 72. 6.) *He ſhall come down as rain upon the mown graſs, as ſhowers that water the earth.* Some of the Ancients expound that place of the coming down of Chriſt in his Incarnation; then indeed he came down like rain upon the mown graſs, he came down ſweetly and powerfully. 'Tis true alſo that Chriſt, who is God, the Word, the ſubſtantial Word, comes down as rain in and with the declarative word of God preached and faithfully diſpenced to the ſouls of men: and when Chriſt comes down thus to us, we ſhould riſe up to him, and return fruits of grace, according to the ſhowres of grace, which we have received. The Prophet gives us an elegant compariſon of the natural and ſpiritual rain in their effects and iſſues, (*Iſa.* 55. 10, 11.) *For as the rain cometh down and the ſnow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give ſeed to the ſower, and bread to the eater; ſo ſhall*

ſhall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth; it ſhall not return unto me voyd, but it ſhall accompliſh that which I pleaſe, and it ſhall proſper in the thing whereto I ſend it. Now what is the pleaſure of God in giving his Word? what is the arrand upon which he ſends it? 'Tis I grant, ſometimes to harden, deafen and blind a people, (*Iſa.* 6. 9, 10.) 'tis ſometimes to be a ſavour of death unto death, (2 *Cor.* 2. 16.) Theſe are dreadfull judiciary purpoſes of God in ſending his Word; nor doth it ever pleaſe the Lord to ſend his Word upon this arrand, but when he is ſorely diſpleaſed by a peoples ſlighting and contempt of his Word. The thing which primarily pleaſeth him, the purpoſe which he chiefly purſueth in ſending his Word, is, that his people may have (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *Their fruit unto holineſs in this life, and in the end everlaſting life.* For theſe ends, the Lord is daily diſtilling upon us the rain of his Word, both in commands and promiſes, and in both abundantly. Therefore let us labour to abound in returns of faith, of love, of hope, of ſelf-deniall, of zeal for God, and of fruit-bearing unto God. If when God diſtills the natural rain, that ſhould provoke us to fruitfulneſs in ſpiritualls, how much more when he pours down ſo much ſpiritual rain upon us! For the cloſe of this meditation, conſider, That

As the natural rain, Firſt, ſoftens the earth, and mollifies it; Secondly, cleanſeth the earth, and waſheth it; Thirdly, enricheth the earth, and makes it fruitfull; Fourthly, comforts the earth, and makes every thing that moves upon it, and grows out of it, to rejoyce; Fifthly, ſometimes drowns the earth, and deſtroys the Inhabitants of it: As I ſay, the natural rain doth all theſe things, ſo alſo doth the ſpiritual rain, the word of God. That, Firſt, mollifieth; Secondly, cleanſeth; Thirdly, fructifieth; Fourthly, comforteth the hearts of all thoſe that receive it; and Fifthly, The rain of the word drowns and deſtroys all thoſe that riſe up againſt it, or will not receive it.

JOB,

JOB, Chap. 36. Verſ. 29, 30, 31.

29. *Alſo, can any underſtand the ſpreadings of the Clouds, or the noiſe of his Tabernacle?*

30. *Behold, he ſpreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the ſea.*

31. *For by them he judgeth the people, he giveth meat in abundance.*

Elihu having ſpoken of the wonderfull work of God in forming and ſending rain in the two former verſes, ſpeaks next of the Clouds, which are as veſſels containing the rain, and in which the rain is carried and conveighed up and down the world for the uſe of man, or for thoſe ſervices, to which God hath appointed it. He begins with a denying Queſtion:

Verſ. 29. *Alſo, can any underſtand the ſpreading of the Clouds?*

As if he had ſaid, To what I ſaid before, I adde this, Here is another ſecret in nature, *Can any underſtand the ſpreading of the Clouds?* He doth not ſay, can vulgar ignorant and unlearned perſons underſtand, but can any? Can the wiſeſt? can the moſt learned? Can the beſt ſtudied Philoſophers *underſtand the ſpreading of the Clouds? Can they underſtand?* That is, they cannot underſtand.

But have not men, eſpecially learned men, underſtanding enough to aſcend the clouds, and diſcover the nature of them? Surely their underſtandings are very mean, or very much clouded, who underſtand not what the ſpreading of the clouds meaneth.

I anſwer, though *Elihu's* queſtion hath a negation in it, yet not a total negation, for doth not exclude the underſtanding of men wholly out of the clouds; he only denieth man a full underſtanding of all things which concern either the nature or motion of the clouds. Wiſe men underſtand much about the ſpreading of the clouds, but they cannot underſtand all. The beſt of godly men underſtand not much, or ſee but a little way into ſpiritual things: And the wiſeſt of worldly men do not, cannot, ſee all in natural things.

things. *Can any underſtand*

The ſpreading of the Clouds?

מפר שי עב *Expanſiones vel differentias nubium, cum aliæ ſteriles ſint, aliæ pluviam, aliæ grandinem mittant; Sed rectius expanſiones vertitur.* Merc:

Here are, Firſt, the Clouds; Secondly, the ſpreading of them. The word which we tranſlate, *ſpreading*, hath a two-fold ſignification: Firſt, (with the alteration only of a poynt upon one letter) it ſignifieth *The difference of things in any kinde:* And then the Text is read, *Can any underſtand the difference of the Clouds*, that is, the variety that is among the clouds. The clouds are not all of a likeneſs, nor all of a bigneſs; there are clouds of many ſorts and ſizes: there are clouds which breed ſnow, and clouds which breed haile, clouds which breed raine, and clouds which breed thunder and lightning. Some clouds are empty, called clouds *without raine* or *water*, (*Pro.* 25. 14. *Jude*, v. 12.) and other clouds are full of water: There is a difference alſo of clouds as to our ſight and view, ſome are black, ſome white, ſome red, ſome are greeniſh, others paliſh clouds, from which various colours and appearances, Prognoſticks are made of the change of weather, as Chriſt told the Phariſees (*Mat.* 16. 2, 3.) Naturaliſts obſerve very many differences in the clouds, nor is it without wonder, that the clouds which are made all of one matter (vapours drawn from below) ſhould produce ſuch and ſo many different effects, that (according to this reading) we have reaſon to put the queſtion, *Who can underſtand the differences of the Clouds?* We read it, and that well and full to the Hebrew Text,

Who can underſtand the ſpreadings of the Clouds, or their *expanſion?*

The moſt cunning and knowing men in the myſteries of nature, cannot either tell how far the clouds will ſpread, or to what poynt and part of the world they will convey their water, and (as I may ſay) unburden themſelves. Thus the words refer back to the two former verſes. The Clouds are ſpread as a Curtain, or as a piece of Tapeſtry, or as a mighty Canopy; *Who can underſtand the ſpreading of them?* The ſpreading of them; Firſt, as they carry raine; or, Secondly, the ſpreading of them (as ſome expound the place) as they convey the Lightening, which the Scripture ſaith, (*Math.* 24. 27.) *Paſſeth from one end of heaven to the other*, from the Eaſt to the Weſt; who knoweth how far the

the Lightning will ſpread in the Clouds? Thus ſome connect it with the following verſe. *Who can underſtand the ſpreading*

Of the Clouds?

עב *nubes a denſitate eſt craſſamentum aeris.* νεφέλη *vel a* נוף *ſtillare, vel a* נפל *cadere.*

There is a ſpecial derivation of the word rendred *Clouds*, from the Hebrew, Greek, and Latine, all pretending to the nature of the Clouds: The Hebrew word properly noteth the thickneſs or groſsneſs of the Clouds; the Greek word noteth the dropping nature of the Clouds, being derived from a roote which ſignifieth *to drop*, or (which is near the ſame) *to deſcend*, the roote word ſignifying *to fall*; the Latine word is taken from covering, becauſe the Clouds mask or cover the face of Heaven, and often hide and ſcreine the ſhining of the Sun from us.

Now becauſe *Elihu* is upon a work of nature, and inſiſts upon it all along in the next Chapter; I ſhall therefore to clear the matter, propoſe and anſwer three Queſtions concerning the Clouds.

Firſt, What is a Cloud, or what is the nature of the Clouds? *A cloud is a moiſt vapour drawn up from the earth or water by the heat of the Sun into the middle region of the Aire* (as Naturaliſts divide the Aire) *where being by the coldneſs of the place congealed, and as it were knit together, it hangeth and continueth there, till it be broken up at the diſpoſe of God, and ſent down for the comfort or correction of man in raine, ſnow, haile,* &c. The clouds of heaven derive their pedigree from the moiſture found on earth, and to the earth they return their moiſture.

Secondly, Seeing the Clouds are ſuch mighty bodies, and contain (as I may ſay) whole ſeas of water in them, and water, being a heavy body, naturally deſcends or tends downward (as all heavy things do) it may be queſtioned (and indeed it is a wonder) how thoſe Clouds are kept aloft in the Aire? how comes it to paſs that ſuch heavy bodies, ſuch floods of water do not preſently fall violently, and at once ſhed themſelves down upon, and overwhelme the earth? To that I anſwer,

Firſt, Some ſay the Clouds are kept up by that natural inbred heat or warmth which is included in them; or that they are kept up by the ſuperiour heat of the Sun, and Stars, which firſt drew them up.

Secondly, Others ſay, theſe mighty Clouds are held up by the

the wind; which keeping them in perpetual motion, they fall not, they deſcend not, but according to a divine order, by which they are diſpoſed of to ſeveral uſes.

Thirdly, Others aſcribe it to the hollowneſs or ſpungineſs of their nature, which receiving and taking in the thin aire, they are more eaſily kept up.

But when we have ſearched to the utmoſt for reaſons in nature, we muſt riſe higher, and reſolve the queſtion according to Scripture and divine Philoſophy, into the power and will of God. The holding up of the Clouds is Gods work as well as the raiſing of them up; He gave this law or command unto the Clouds in the day of their creation, that they ſhould not fall down nor diſtill a drop, but by his own commandement and appoyntment. Thus we find it expreſſed by *Moſes* in his deſcription of the creation, (*Gen.* 1. 6.) *Let the firmament* (that is, the aire, the inferiour aire next to the middle region) *divide the waters from the waters.* Here is a divine ſanction; there are waters above, and waters below; And ſaith God, *Let the firmament divide the waters from the waters*; that is, thoſe waters that are drawn up into Clouds in the aire, a proviſion for Raine, *&c.* let them be kept above, and divided from the Sea and waters that dwell below. Thus there was a Law at firſt to keep quarter, as I may ſay, between thoſe waters. And *Solomon* ſpeaking of the eternal Son of God, of his co-eternity with the Father, brings him (under the name of Wiſdome) ſpeaking thus of himſelf; *I was with him* (when he did this and that, and among the reſt, *Prov.* 8. 28.) *When he eſtabliſhed the Clouds above*; that is, when God made a Decree that the Clouds ſhould ſtay above, and not come down but at his call. So 'tis expreſſed (*Job* 26. 8.) *God bindeth up the waters in the thick Cloud, and the Cloud is not rent under them.* 'Tis not of it ſelf that the Cloud (having ſuch a weight in it) doth not rent and break, but, ſaith God, it ſhall not. (*Pro.* 30. 4.) *He hath bound the waters in a garment.* But what is the garment? His own decree and purpoſe is the garment which bindeth up the waters. For as the waters of the Sea are bounded by the Decree of God (*Job* 38. 11.) So likewiſe the waters in the aire are bound up by his Decree (*Pſal.* 148. 4, 6.) *Praiſe him ye heaven of heavens, and ye waters which are above the heavens; he hath eſtabliſhed them for ever, and hath made a decree which ſhall not paſs.*

Zanch: de operibus dei. l. 2. c. 1.

paſs. He hath eſtabliſhed the waters which are above the heavens, aſwel as the waters below the heavens; he hath eſtabliſhed them by a decree (like that of the *Medes* and *Perſians*) which ſhall not be diſanulled. So then, here's the anſwer to this ſecond queſtion, How it comes to paſs, that the Clouds containing ſuch floods of water (which is an heavy body) do not deſcend and overwhelm the earth? This is by the power and decree, or by the powerful decree of God, who hath cauſed ſuch a weak and thin ſubſtance, as the Clouds, made up only of Vapours, to hold thoſe mighty waters cloſe, and keep them priſoners, that not a ſpoonful ſhall ſhed forth till himſelf pleaſeth. The Clouds, as ſome have well expreſſed it, are like ſpunges filled with water, and till God layeth his hand upon the Clouds (that is, till he gives a word) and as I may ſay, ſqueezeth or preſſeth them by his providence (as we ſqueez a ſpung full of water) the waters fall not. Thus we ſee the reaſon, why *Elihu* makes ſo great a matter of the ſpreading of the Clouds, and why the waters fall not preſently together, nor preſently drop out of them, but in their ſeaſon.

A third Querie concerning the Clouds may be this; *Why are they placed above? What is their uſe?*

I anſwer, The uſe of the Clouds may be conſidered two ways; firſt, there is a natural, ſecondly, a ſpiritual uſe of them.

Firſt, there is a natural uſe of them, and that is twofold.

Firſt, That they may contain water in a readineſs to moiſten and fatten the earth: Stores and treaſures of rain are kept in them to ſupply the neceſſities of all earthly creatures.

Secondly, The natural uſe of the Clouds is, to attemper the the heat of the air, and to be as a Curtain, or Screen between us and the Sun. If the Sun ſhould always ſhine fully upon the earth, we were not able to abide it; but the Clouds coming between, do exceedingly qualifie and moderate the heat and fierceneſs of the Sun. Theſe, beſides others, are their natural uſes.

And if we look into the Scripture, we ſhall find many ſpiritual and gracious uſes, for which God hath made the Clouds.

Firſt, God hath ſet his Bow in the Clouds, as a token of his favour unto mankind, as a token of his general favour, that he will not drown the world again (*Gen.* 9. 14, 15.) *And it ſhall come to paſs, when I bring a Cloud over the Earth, that the Bow ſhall be*

ſeen in the Cloud; and I will remember my Covenant which is between me and you, and every living creature of all fleſh; and the waters ſhall no more become a flood, to deſtroy all fleſh. This is alluded to by the Prophet (*Iſa.* 54. 9.) as a token of the ſpecial favour of God to his People, that he will never break Covenant with them. When Believers ſee his Bow in the Cloud, they may be as well aſſured, that they ſhall be freed from a deluge of wrath, as that the world ſhall not be overwhelmed again with a deluge of waters.

Secondly, We find the Lord making uſe of a Cloud, or uſing the miniſtery of a Cloud, in a gracious way, for the conducting of his People out of *Egypt* quite through the Wilderneſs unto *Canaan*. That I grant was more than an ordinary Cloud, and lower and nearer the earth than uſually Clouds are, yet it was doubtleſs of the ſame nature with other Clouds (*Exod.* 13.21. *Neh.* 9. 19.) And therefore, when the Prophet would aſſure the Church of guidance and protection, he tells them (*Iſa.* 3. 5.) *The Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Sion, and upon her aſſemblies, a Cloud and Smoak by day, and the ſhining of the flaming Fire by night: for upon all the glory ſhall be a defence.* And we at this day, may make this ſpiritual uſe (accoding to Scripture) of the Clouds, which we behold, as to mind us how the Lord both protected and guided the People of *Iſrael* through the wilderneſs, ſo to aſſure us that he will protect and guide us through the World. Chriſt is this Cloud, a covering protecting Cloud unto his Church; and we may ſweetly meditate upon him, not only when we behold the Sun, but as often as we behold the clouds.

Further, As Chriſt ſerves his Church like a Cloud, ſo the Clouds have done and ſhall do many ſervices to Chriſt. A bright Cloud overſhadowed Chriſt in his tranſfiguration (*Mat.* 17.5.) A Cloud received him out of the Apoſtles ſight at his aſcenſion (*Act.* 1.9.) and he ſhall come again in the Clouds to judgment (*Mat.* 24.30. *Luke* 21.27.) He is alſo repreſented) ſitting upon a white Cloud (*Rev.* 14.14.

Thirdly, The ſpirit of God gives us another gracious uſe of, and meditation upon the Clouds; that as often as we ſee thick and black Clouds, which threaten a grievous ſtorm, ſcattered, and the air cleared, this ſhould put us in mind of the abundant grace of God pardoning our ſin (*Iſa.* 44.22.) *I have blotted, as a thick Cloud, thy tranſgreſſion, and as a Cloud thy ſins.* Falſe and faithleſs Miniſters are called *Clouds without water* (*Jude* v. 12.) And the faithful Miniſters of the Goſpel, *flee as a Cloud* to water Souls, as the converted Gentiles are ſaid, *to flee as doves to the windows* (*Iſa.* 60. 8.) There are not only natural but ſpiritual uſes and improvements to be made of the Clouds, as often as we behold them; and the Scripture in many places, leads and points us to ſuch meditations. It is ſaid of *Luther*, that once beholding a great Cloud, that promiſed, or had a great appearance of rain, in a time of drought, blown away and diſpelled, without yeelding one drop of rain to refreſh the earth; he turned to ſome of his friends, and ſaid, *Such are the Promiſes of the world.* Men, ſaid he, make great and fair promiſes, pretending much good, and good-will to thoſe to whom they are made, which yet vaniſh and come to nothing; and concluding his obſervation upon the deceitful appearance of the Cloud, added the words of *Solomon* (*Prov.* 25. 14.) *Whoſo boaſteth himſelf of a falſe gift, is like clouds without rain.* Such eſpecially are all falſe teachers, they, if any, boaſt themſelves of a falſe gift, that is, they either pretend to a gift which they have not, or they pretend their gift is of Chriſt, when it is not; theſe are *like Clouds without rain*, or (as the text in the Epiſtle of *Jude*, even now mentioned) calls them, they are *Clouds without water, carried about of winds*, that is, which way ſo ever the wind of outward reſpects and advantages bloweth, they are carried.

Tales ſunt promiſſiones mundi.

So much for anſwer to thoſe three queſtions about the Clouds. *Who can underſtand the ſpreading of the Clouds?*

Heuce note;

First, *Even natural things exceed the reach of mans underſtanding.*

How much more do ſpiritual things, the myſteries of Grace! *Nichodemus* was a knowing man, a Maſter in *Iſrael*, yet how ſimply did he ſpeak when Chriſt propoſed to him, and preſented him with the neceſſity of a new-birth! Nor hath a natural man a clearer inſight in any other Goſpel myſtery (1 *Cor.* 2. 14.) *The natural man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned. But he that is ſpiritual judgeth* (or *diſcerneth*) *all things*; that is, he hath a principle of ſpiri-

spiritual understanding, whereby he is able to make a right judgment of all things necessary to his own edification and salvation.

Again;

If the natural things which God hath made (the spreading of the Clouds) exceed our understanding, then how much more doth God himself who made them!

Who can understand the spreadings of God? the immensity of God? the eternity, the omnipotency, the infinity of God? That's the thing *Elihu* chiefly aimes at in all this discourse. While he poseth *Job*, and all men, in the natural works of God, he would convince *Job*, and all men, that neither he was, nor any man is able to comprehend the equity and righteousness of his proceeding in the darker wayes of Providence. And this he did, because *Job* had too often (upon the matter) called God to answer, asking why it was so? instead of a silent submission to what he did not understand, nor could see the reason of.

Further, consider this particular in nature, *The spreading of the Clouds*. We see the Clouds every day, and we see their spreadings, that's common and obvious to the eye; yet (saith *Elihu*) who can understand these *spreadings*? There is a greater latitude in the Clouds than we imagine; and if we cannot fully understand the things which we see, how can we understand what we see not? Who apprehends the true greatness of the Clouds, the greatness of the Moon, the greatness of the Stars, the greatness of the Sun; all which our eyes behold? We can neither understand by our eye, nor by the rules and reports of the greatest Astronomers, the true magnitude or greatness of those heavenly visible bodies; who then can take the true dimension (if I may so speak) of things invisible? *Who can understand the spreading of the Clouds?*

Or the noise (or *noises*) *of his Tabernacle.*

תשאות *a* שאה *sonuit, perstrepuit, dedit sonitum tumultus bellici* Rab. Shelo.

The word notes a dreadful noise, a noise with a tumult, such a noise as is made when ruine and desolation cometh upon a place, such a noise as the Prophet describeth in a time of war. *Moab shall die with a tumult* (Amos 2. 2.) *Who can understand the noise of his tabernacle?*

This noise may be expounded two wayes;

First,

First, Of thunder-claps. When Clouds are discharged, their thunder-bolts, like cannon bullets, rattle through the air: *Who can understand this noise of his tabernacle?* As no man can at all *understand the thunder of his power* (*Chap.* 26.14.) so not the All of his powerful thunder. This is a truth, and the text may well take in that noise, the noise of the thunder. But because *Elihu* speakes professedly and expresly of thunder in the next Chapter (*vers.* 4.) therefore (I conceive) *the noise of his tabernacle*, here may be some-what else, or less than that of thunder, that is, *the noise of the winds*, breaking out from the tabernacle of God. What a bustling noise, what an out-cry (as I may say) the winds make we all know, especially when they become stormes, and are not only winds but tempests. There are sweet gentle gales of wind, which make but a little murmur, or whisper in the air, we can scarce hear their voice; but some winds roar, some winds come little short of thunder, for noise and lowdness, and I suppose *Elihu* chiefly intends this noise, by *The noise*

Of his tabernacle.

But what is the tabernacle of God? I answer; That word *Tabernacle* is often used in the Old Testament; properly it signifieth a tent in war, a military mansion, a flitting habitation, or portable house, having no fixed or setled seat. The tabernacle under the Law was the place appointed by God for publick worship. We read also of the *Feast of Tabernacles* (*Lev.* 23. 34.) at which solemn Feast, the *Jews* dwelt seven dayes in tents, to put them in remembrance, that God made their fore-fathers dwell in tents when he brought them out of *Egypt*, as also to mind them, that here they had no abiding place, but were to seek one to come. And as this place of publick worship, so any place for private dwelling was called a tabernacle. *Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, until &c.* (Said *David*, *Ps.* 132. 3.) that is, into my house, which though it be a royal Pallace, yet I look upon it, but as a movable tabernacle. But doth God dwell in a movable house? God is immovable, he makes no removes, yet whersoever God is pleased to shew himself in his power and marvelous works, there we may say his tabernacle is. The tabernacle of God, where this noise, this mighty noise is made, is nothing else but the Clouds before spoken of. The

Tabernaculum hic סכה *dicitur unde Festum Succoth i. e. Tabernaculorum.*

Clouds

Clouds are Gods tabernacle; they are called ſo expreſly by a word of very near cognation unto this (*Pſal.* 18. 11.) *He maketh the Clouds his pavilion.* A pavilion is an extraordinary tabernacle; a pavilion is that tabernacle which is proper to a King or to the General of an Army. Now ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *He maketh the Clouds his pavilion*; In them he ſhews his power and glory. They are alſo called the chariots of God (*Pſal.* 104. 3. *Deut.* 32. 6.) and he is ſaid to come in the Clouds, as a Prince in his chariot. He came *in a thick Cloud* (*Exod.* 19. 9.) and he *deſcended in a Cloud* (*Exod.* 34. 5.) which here is called his tabernacle. So then, the Clouds, together with all that middle region of the air, where the rain now, and fiery meteors, are generated, are in Scripture allegorically called, the tabernacle of God; becauſe there he ſeems often to dwell or reſide, for the producing of many wonderful works upon this inferiour world. We may take the word here in a double alluſion unto a tabernacle, or unto two ſorts of tabernacles.

Firſt, There were ordinary tabernacles, wherein men dwelt. The ancient Hebrews dwelt in tents or tabernacles; theſe were tabernacles for civil uſe, or for habitation; in alluſion unto which, the Apoſtle ſpeakes of the body, wherein the ſoul dwels (2 *Cor.* 5.) *When the earthly houſe of this tabernacle ſhall be diſſolved, we know, that we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

Secondly, There were tabernacles for military uſe, ſouldiers tents, or tabernacles. As the whole heavens, ſo the clouds eſpecially may be called the tabernacle of God in both reſpects; they are his houſe, wherein he ſits unſeen, and doth wonders all the world over; in them he ſheweth his power, and appears gloriouſly, and as a great Prince or mighty General he ſends out his edicts and orders from the clouds, he commands winds, ſtormes, tempeſts, ſnow & haile for ſeveral diſpenſations to go from thence, according as his own infinite wiſdom ſeeth fit, and the caſes of men require, whether in wayes of Judgment or of mercy; as *Elihu* tells us, yet more diſtinctly, at the 31th verſe, *For by them* (ſaith he) *judgeth he the people, he giveth meat in abundance.* The clouds are very fit and commodious for Gods uſe in any of theſe reſpects; either for the terrifying and puniſhing of the wicked, or, for the helping and feeding of them that fear him. Now forаſmuch

aſmuch as the clouds are called the tabernacle of God upon theſe accounts,

Learn firſt;

There God is ſaid to be eſpecially, where he eſpecially workes.

God is no more in one place of the world than in another, as to his being and exiſtence; for he is every where, he filleth heaven and earth. We muſt not think that God is ſhut up in the clouds as a man in his tabernacle; but becauſe God workes much in the clouds, and doth great things by the rain, thunder and lightening, therefore the cloudes, whence theſe Meteors iſſue, are called his tabernacle. Where-ever God works much, he is ſaid to dwell. Why is God ſaid to dwell with them that are of an humble and contrite heart? even becauſe he workes much in them, and much by them. So becauſe many great works of God are done in the Clouds, as we ſhall ſee more particularly hereafter, therefore the Lord is ſaid to dwell there as in his tabernacle.

Secondly, When 'tis ſaid, *Who can underſtand the noiſe of his tabernacle?*

Obſerve;

The moſt dreadful ſtorms and tempeſts, the roaring winds which we hear at any time, are ſent out by God, they are the noiſe of his tabernacle;

They go when he ſaith go, (*Pſal.* 148. 8.) *Stormy winds and tempeſts fulfilling his will.* We may think, ſtormes, of all things, leaſt under command and order, yet they are under an exact order. The moſt ſtormy winds go not an haires breadth beſides, or beyond the commiſſion which God gives them. As often as we hear the roaring noiſe of the wind, much more, of thunder, let us remember, 'tis *the noiſe of his tabernacle.*

Verſ. 30. *Behold, he ſpreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the ſea.*

Elihu inſiſts ſtill upon the workes of God, *He ſpreadeth his light.* Some underſtand by this *light*, the *lightening*; and it is a great truth, God wonderfully ſpreads the lightening upon the dark clouds, as if they were all in a flame, That's clear to the eye when it lightneth; and God is ſayd (*Pſal.* 144. 6.) *To caſt*

forth his lightening; which comes neer this word in the text, *he spreadeth it*. But because in the next chapter *Elihu* speakes purposely of the lightening, therefore I shall not stay upon that sence here, but decline it.

Rather take light in the common notion; *He spreadeth his light*, that is, *the light of the Sun*, which is eminently called Gods Light, *upon it*, that is, upon the cloud spoken of in the former verse: and so the two parts of this verse, yeild us a description (as I conceive) of the weather-changes made by God. When we have had much rain and stormes, God can presently spread his light upon the cloud, that is, cause the light and heat of the Sun to conquer the clouds and scatter them.

שרשי

Radices maris sunt profundissimæ insulæque illius partes.

And (he also) *covereth the bottom of the Sea.* That is, by and by, he makes it very dark by the gathering of thick clouds; even as dark as the bottom of the Sea, whither the light cannot come, or dark to the bottom of the Sea. The original is, *the roots of the Sea*, that is, the lowest parts of the Sea, which we significantly translate, *the bottom of the Sea.* Some explicate the whole verse, *He spreads his light upon the face of the whole heavens, and spreads the waters over the Ocean, so that no bottom can be seen, scarcely found.* Mr. *Broughton*, by the *roots* of the Sea, understands the *earth.* Another saith, he makes mention *of the roots of the Sea*, because the waters of the Sea, are as it were the roots of the Clouds, they chiefly supplying the matter of which they are made. Vapours drawn from the waters of the Sea, by the heat of the Sun, become Clouds, and these Clouds cover both Earth and Sea, far and near. Thus 'tis matter of wonder to see such great and sudden changes in the air; that the same Sun with its beames should exhale those vapours which are condensed into Clouds, and that soon after, those Sun-beams should scatter and dissolve those Clouds; or that now the heavens should be so masked with Clouds as to make all dark, and in a little space, all return to its former brightnes and beauty.

He spreadeth his Light. What is there in the world that is not Gods? Here he calleth Light his.

Hence note;

God loves to entitle himself to Light in an especial manner.

(*Mat.* 5. 44.) *He causeth his Sun to shine, &c.* The Moon is his as well as the Sun, and the Stars are his as much as either; but because the Sun is the greater Vessel and conveigher of Light, therefore saith Christ, *He causeth his Sun to shine on the evil and the good*, &c. God himself is *Light*, and *the Father of Lights* (*Jam.* 1. 17.) which is true not only of spiritual Light, by which the things of God are discovered to us; but also of natural Light, the light of the Sun, that's Gods Light too, he is the Father of it.

Secondly note;

The changes which we see in the air, from fair to fowl weather, from calms to tempests, are from God.

It is not in the creature to make one day or hour fair or foul. As Christ gives the reason why no man should swear by his head, because he cannot *make an hair white or black*, he cannot change the colour of an hair, nor make a hair of any colour: So, it is not in the power of any man, to make one day fair or foul, that's Gods peculiar; *He spreadeth his Light upon the Clouds, and covereth the bottom of the Sea.*

Vers. 31. *For by them he judgeth the People, he giveth meat in abundance.*

This 31th Verse gives us the effect of all that which *Elihu* had spoken before, of the rain, of storms and tempests, and we may add, of lightening, and of thunder; *By them he judgeth the people and giveth meat in abundance.* Here are two effects; First, an effect grievous; Secondly, an effect gracious: The former preceeds from the justice, the latter from the mercy and goodnes of God.

By them, that is, by the rain, by the winds, *&c. he judgeth the people.*

To judge is taken three wayes in Scripture.

First, To judge, is to rule or govern. When it is said, such a man judged *Israel*, the meaning is, he ruled and governed *Israel*: That's the language of the book of *Judges* every where, when their Governours are spoken of.

Secondly, To *Judge*, is to determine, or give sentence in a special case (*Deut.* 25. 1.)

Thirdly, To judge is to punish or afflict, and thus often in Scripture,

ture, when God puniſheth any perſon or people, he is ſaid to judge them (*Pſal.* 51. 4.) *That thou mayeſt be cleared when thou judgeſt*, that is, when thou afflicteſt, or layeſt thine hand upon me (ſaith *David*) as God had threatened by *Nathan*, that the ſword ſhould not depart from his houſe; this moved *David* to make confeſſion, *Againſt thee, thee only, have I ſinned:* —— *that thou mighteſt be juſtified when thou ſpeakeſt, and cleared when thou judgeſt.* As if he had ſaid, my confeſſion, O Lord, will be thy juſtification; all may ſee I have given thee abundant cauſe to lay thy chaſtening hand upon me (*Heb.* 13. 4.) *Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*; though men let them paſs, yet God will not, he will puniſh them. Again, in that notable place (1 *Cor.* 11. 31, 32.) *If we would judge our ſelves we ſhould not be judged of the Lord.* What it is to be judged, the Apoſtle ſheweth in the next words; *But when we are judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord.* The Apoſtle warns the Church to take heed how they came to the ſolemn aſſemblies, leſt coming raſhly and unpreparedly, the hand of God ſhould fall heavy upon them, by weakneſs, ſickneſs and death. When *Elihu* ſaith, *By them he judgeth the People.* We are to take judging in this third ſence; *He judgeth*, that is, he afflicteth and puniſheth men by theſe things. Thus the Alluſion is elegantly followed. The Lord from his tabernacle, or throne in the Clouds, ſends forth Edicts, and ſignes his Warrants, for the puniſhment both of nations and perſons; windy ſtormes, rain and thunder, going forth as executioners of his orders and appointments: *By them he judgeth the people.*

Hence obſerve;

Firſt, *God can make a ſcourge of any of the creatures.*

By them, that is, by the rain and by the wind, *he judgeth the people.* He can uſe what inſtrument he pleaſeth to afflict and chaſten us with. Read the holy Scriptures, read the Hiſtories of the Church, and you will find all ſorts of creatures ſummoned one time or other, and ſent forth as Gods meſſengers, to puniſh the pride and ſtubbornneſs, the impenitency and perverſneſs of mens hearts and wayes. How many creatures did God make uſe of to puniſh *Pharaoh* with, and many of them very contemptible ones; among the reſt, the hail, rain, and thunder ſpoken of in this place, were his inſtruments of vengeance in plaguing that hardned King. Whenſoever God afflicts a people by the creatures, he judgeth them by the creatures. Let us take heed, that we provoke not God to turn thoſe things which were given for our good, to our hurt; that he make not what was made our ſervant, our puniſhment. God made all creatures ſerviceable and uſeful to man, but through ſin they become grievous and deſtructive to man; *By them he judgeth the people.*

He giveth meat in abundance.

Eſcam ad copiam. Heb. i. e. *copioſum.*

Here is the ſecond effect wrought or produced by theſe creatures: *He giveth*, that is, God giveth; *meat*, that is, all kind of food and proviſion, for the life both of man and beaſt; and he giveth it *in abundance*: He doth not give it ſcantly or nigardly, in ſmall portions and pittances, but in full meaſure, preſſed down, heaped up, and running over. *By them*, that is, by the rain and by the wind, &c. God gives us our meat in abundance. One tranſlation ſaith, *He giveth meat to many*, that is, to all.

Dat eſcam multis mortalibus. Hieron.

Hence note;

Firſt, *Our daily food is the gift of God.*

He giveth meat. No man gets his own bread unleſs God giveth it; God muſt give it before we can get it.

Secondly note;

God is a free, bountiful and liberal houſe-keeper;

He giveth meat in abundance; he giveth to very many, yea, to all, and he giveth very much; he giveth meat to all the fowles of the Air, and to all the fiſhes of the Sea, to all men and beaſts living on the earth, they all receive food from God: he giveth food to all fleſh (*Pſal.* 136. 25.) *He filleth every living thing.* (Pſal. 147. 9.) *He giveth to the beaſt his food, and feedeth the young ravens when they cry.* Chriſt makes this an argument of faith in God for food and cloathing (*Mat.* 6. 26.) *Behold the fowls of the air, for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them: are not ye much better than they?* How little faith have you, who knowing that God feeds the fowls of the air, yet cannot truſt him for your food! *He giveth food in abundance.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly note;

Plenty and ſcarcity are at the diſpoſe of God;

He can give meat in ſcarcity, as well as meat in abundance; he can give cleanneſs of teeth as well as fulneſs of bread: And as he can ſtrengthen the ſtaff of bread, ſo break it, and *cauſe us to eat bread by weight and with care, and to drink water by meaſure and with aſtoniſhment* (Ezek. 4. 16.) To eat by weight and drink by meaſure, is to eat and drink in the want of bread and water, as is expreſſed *(verſ. 17.)* And as theſe changes of our natural, ſo of our ſpiritual food are from the Lord (*Amos* 8. 11.) *I will ſend a famine* (What famine?) *not of bread, but of hearing the word of the Lord.* 'Tis the Lord who ſends plenty and ſcarcity of bread, whether for the ſoul or for the body.

Fourthly, In that he ſaith, by them he giveth meat in abundance,

Note;

God uſeth natural meanes as the cauſe either of plenty or ſcarcity.

The Lord could give us abundance, if he pleaſed, without rain, but he rarely gives abundance but by rain; he ſends rain out of the Clouds to water the earth, and make it fruitful. The Lord could make our ſouls fruitful in every good work, without the preaching of the word, but he ſeldom doth it (I believe never when the word may be had) without the preaching of the word. And therefore the Lord by his Prophet makes a compariſon between, or a paralel of theſe two (*Iſa.* 55. 10, 11.) *As the rain cometh down, and the ſnow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give ſeed to the ſower, and bread to the eater; ſo ſhall my word be, that goeth out of my mouth,* &c. The Lord uſeth rain and ſnow, yea, wind and thunder, to fit the earth, as he uſeth his Word and holy Ordinances to fit the ſoul, to bring forth fruit to himſelf. He could do both alone, but he improveth that order of nature and grace which himſelf at firſt ſet up and inſtituted to bring about theſe excellent ends. *By them he giveth meat in abundance.*

παρέξει, τροφὴν πολλήν. *Præbebit eſcam per multam.* Sept.

The Greek tranſlation renders *all manner of muchneſs.* From the whole learn, what cauſe we have to acknowledge the goodneſs of God in every ſhower of rain, and fleer of ſnow; for by them he giveth us our meat.

We ſhould hence alſo be minded to fear the Lord, and to take heed of his diſpleaſure. It is ſaid (*Acts* 12.20.) when *Herod was highly diſpleaſed with them of Tire and Sidon, they came with one accord to him; and having made Blaſtus the Kings Chamberlain their friend, deſired peace, becauſe their Country was nouriſhed by the Kings Country.* O how much more ſhould we labour to avoid the diſpleaſure of God, and haſten to make our peace with him, ſeeing our Country is nouriſhed by his Country! The heavens nouriſh the earth, elſe the earth could not afford any thing for our nouriſhment. We are fed rather from the heavens than from the earth. The clouds drop down and make the earth fat, to give graſs for cattel and corn for man. *Elihu* ſpeaks nothing of the Earth, but of the Clouds, from them we are fed.

Lastly conſider, *Elihu* joynes both effects expreſly, *By them he judgeth the people, he giveth meat,* &c.

Hence note;

The Lord can make the ſame creature either beneficial or hurtful to us.

That which is an inſtrument in his hand for good to his ſervants, is often a plague and a ſcourge to his enemies. The rain which at one time moiſtens the earth, at another time drowns it; the rain which at one time cheriſheth the creatures, at another time choaks them. The winds which at one time fan the air and cool it, at another time enrage and vex it; the winds which at one time ſweeten and cleanſe the air, at another time corrupt and infect it. The Lord can with the ſame creatures, furniſh himſelf for any diſpenſation: *By them he judgeth the people, and by them he giveth meat in abundance.*

JOB, Chap. 36. Verſ. 32, 33.

32. *With clouds he covereth the light, and commandeth it not to ſhine, by the cloud that cometh between.*

33. *The noiſe whereof ſheweth concerning it, the cattel alſo concerning the vapour.*

Hujus et ſequentis verſus difficultas et obſcuritas tanta ſemper ab omnibus enarratoribus habita eſt ut vix aliis in toto hoc libro, ne dicam in toto ſacro codice locus iſto impenetrabilior eſſe videatur. Bold:

THeſe two verſes have a Character of difficulty and obſcurity put upon them by ſeveral interpreters; and ſome have concluded them the moſt difficult and darkeſt portion of the whole Book of *Job*, yea, of the whole Book of God. And ſhould I reckon up all the various Grammatical conſtructions of theſe words, together with the diſtinct interpretations given upon them, I ſhould weary my ſelf, and rather perplex than advantage the Reader.

And therefore I ſhall ſpeak to theſe two verſes, Firſt, as they are laid down plainly in our tranſlation, according to which (with ſubmiſſion to the judgement of thoſe learned Authors) I ſee neither any great difficulty nor obſcurity in them, and ſhall afterwards give a brief account at leaſt, of ſome of thoſe different readings and tranſlations which I find upon them.

The words (as I conceive) according to the mind of our tranſlators, and as the Text clearly beareth, hold out two things concerning the raine, of which *Elihu* had ſpoken before.

Firſt, What is naturally preparatory to raine or foule weather, that we have in the 32d verſe, *With clouds he covereth the light, and commandeth it not to ſhine by the Cloud that cometh between.*

Secondly, We have that which is declaratory of raine, or (as ſome call them) *the Prognoſticks* and ſigns of raine; theſe are laid down in the 33d verſe, *The noiſe thereof ſheweth concerning it, the Cattel alſo concerning the vapour.*

Verſ. 32. *With clouds he covereth the light.*

He, that is, God covereth the light with Clouds. We heard of the Clouds at the 29th verſe, but the word there uſed is not that

that which is uſed in this 32d verſe. The word here made uſe of by *Elihu*, ſignifies generally any thing that is *hollow* or *concave*, as a ſpoon, platter, or bool, or ſuch like uterſils, which are bowed with a convex and concave ſuperficies; it hath alſo particularly two eminent ſignifications, both of which are made uſe of in this place by Interpreters. Firſt, it ſignifieth the *hand*; ſo we tranſlate it (*Job* 16. 17.) *There is no injuſtice in my hand.* The word which here we tranſlate a *Cloud*, is there tranſlated, a *hand*: Now, the hand, we know, hath a hollowneſs or cavity in it, unleſs when it is purpoſely held forth plaine. The ſecond ſignification is that of the Text, *a Cloud*, which is alſo hollow, and (as moſt conclude) the ſame word is put to ſignifie a *hand*, and a *Cloud*, becauſe *Clouds* uſually at the firſt appearance are but ſmall, or like a hand, as *Elijahs* ſervant reported to him, after his ſeventh going to view the Heavens (1 *Kings* 18. 44.) *Behold, a little Cloud like a mans hand.* In this ſence we take it here in our tranſlation: Some render *With his hand he covereth the light*, we ſay, *With Clouds*

Vox כפים *ambigua eſt, ad manum & nubes, propria volas denotat; ad nubes refero quia de iis ſtatuens oſtium, et quia proprie curvaturas ſignificat, quales in unaquaq; imbo duæ ſunt, convexa & concava.* De Dieu, in loc.

He covereth the light.

He covereth or hideth the light, that is, from our eyes, he cauſeth it to diſappear, or not to appear to us: The word notes covering as with a garment, or covering with any thing that intercepts and ſtops the ſight; and hence by a Trope it is applyed to the pardon of ſin (*Pſal.* 32. 1.) *Bleſſed is the man whoſe ſin is covered.* When the Lord pardons ſin, he is ſaid to cover it, becauſe he will not ſuffer it to appear againſt the ſinner, nor be charged upon him to condemnation. As pardon covers ſins, ſo Clouds cover the Heavens, and when they are covered the light is covered. *With Clouds he covereth the light.* The Prophet *Jeremy* in his *Lamentations* (Chap. 3. 44.) complained ſadly, becauſe God (who is light) had covered himſelf, *Thou haſt covered thy ſelf with a Cloud, that our prayers ſhould not paſs through.* As God doth ſometimes cover himſelf, or hide the light of his Countenance from his people, as with a cloud, that their prayers cannot paſs through; ſo he often hides or covers the light of the aire with natural or proper Clouds, that the Sun beams for a time cannot pierce nor paſs through; *With Clouds he covereth*

כסה *Texit, abſcondit, imponendo aliquid quo tegas tanquam operculo vel veſte.*

The light.

אור *tum lucem, tum ſolem, a quo lux, vel quæ eſt fons lucis ſignificat.*

The word uſed by *Elihu*, ſignifies both *light* and the *Sun*, which is the fountain, from whence *light* flows and iſſues; yea, the word ſignifies alſo *fire*. The Sun, Moon, and Stars, are called (*ignes*) *the fires of heaven*, becauſe like ſo many fires or mighty torches they give light to us on earth. And by a metaphor the word ſignifies *Joy*, *Comfort*, all ſorts of good things; as on the other ſide, by darkneſs, troubles and calamities of all ſorts are metaphorically expreſt in Scripture. *With Clouds he covereth the light,*

And commandeth it not to ſhine by the Cloud that cometh between.

As if he had ſaid, When a Cloud covereth the light, 'tis the command of God which puts the Cloud as a covering upon it. Thoſe words [*not to ſhine*] are not expreſly in the Hebrew Text; there it is only thus; *With Clouds he covereth the light, and commandeth it by that which cometh between*: nor is the word *Cloud* expreſt in the latter part of the verſe, we put it in as a ſupplyment in another Character, more fully to expreſs the ſence of the Text.

And commandeth it not to ſhine.

Verbum צוה *quod ſignificat præcipere, quem regit præpoſitionem* על *ſignificat interdicere.* Hiſc:

The word which we tranſlate *to command*, properly ſignifies, to bid or command a thing to be done; but when it ſtands in conſtruction, as here, with *Gnal*, it ſignifieth to forbid or ſtay a thing that it be not done. (*Gen.* 2. 16.) *God commanded the man*, or *concerning the man*, &c. As that command expreſſed a liberty to eat of every other tree in the Garden, ſo it included a prohibition of eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, which is alſo expreſſed at the 17th verſe. We have a like conſtruction of the word (*Gen.* 28. 6. 1 *Kings* 2. 43.) *He commandeth it not to ſhine*

By the Cloud that cometh between.

פגע *occurrit irruit aggreſſus eſt, per Metaphoram interceſſit oc-*

By that which cometh between, or by that which meets it, that is, as we ſupply it, by the thick and dark Cloud which meets and intercepts the bright beames of the Sun. The root of the word ſignifies to meet with force (not only *occurrere* but *irruere*) to

currit deprecandi cau.a. Hinc מפגיע *per occurrens, ſc. per occurrentem nubem, qua interveniente lucem ſolu tegit.* Druſ. Merc:

to ruſh upon, to invade, to aſſault, or to charge, as an enemy is charged in battel; and it ſignifies, by a Metaphor, to intercede, to make prayer or ſupplication for another, which is as it were a coming between man and man. An Interceſſor cometh between two parties, the party offending, and the party offended, he interpoſeth himſelf to make up the breach, or to take up the difference, that if poſſible a reconciliation may be made. The Latine word which we tranſlate Latinely to *intercede*, is of the ſame ſignificancy; and this Hebrew word is often ſo rendred (*Jer.* 7. 16.) *Pray not for this people, nor make interceſſion to me*; that is, thou ſhalt not come between me and this people to ſtop or ſtay me, that I break not out into wrath, or from pouring out my wrath upon them. In other Scriptures it is uſed to note an act of interceſſion between man and man (*Gen.* 23. 8.) as alſo an act of addreſs by prayer and intreaty, whether towards God or man, (*Job* 21. 15. *Ruth* 1. 16.) And becauſe the word properly notes meeting another with a kind of violence, it intimates with what a holy violence, with what ſtrength, earneſtneſs, and fervency of ſpirit, we ought to meet God, either in prayer for our ſelves, or when we come as interceſſors, and ſtand before him in the behalf of others, whether Perſons, Nations, or Churches.

Many Interpreters (as I ſhall ſhew afterward) take the word in this ſence here for an Interceſſor, or for a perſon that prayeth and intercedeth for another. We, in our tranſlation, expound it of a thing, and that thing of a Cloud that interpoſeth or cometh between us and the Light. He commandeth the light not to ſhine, *by the Cloud that cometh between*, or, *by the Cloud that paſſeth between us* and the light of the Sun.

Hence note;

First, *The beſt and ſweeteſt mercies we have in this world, may quickly meet with a ſtop.*

When we have the Light, a Cloud may ſoon come between the Light and us: Which as it is true of the natural Light and Clouds, ſo of that which is Light in a figure, our moſt comfortable enjoyments; and that which is a Cloud in a figure, troubleſome and afflictive Providences. There is no light, of what kind ſoever it is, but there may be a Cloud to intercept it, and come between us and that; even the light of the favour of God, the light of

his countenance, which is the moſt bleſſed light of all, even that light hath many a Cloud. The clouds of our ſins cauſe the Lord to cloud his face with anger and diſpleaſure, and hinder the light of his favour and loving kindneſs from ſhining upon our ſouls.

Secondly, In that *Elihu* ſaith, *He commandeth it not to ſhine*,

Note;

The Lord hath a ſoveraign power over all creatures;

He ſends forth his commanding word, not only to Angels and Men, but to Beaſts, yea, to inanimates, he ſends out his orders and edicts to the Clouds of the Air, to the Light of the Sun, to things without life, and they ſubmit preſently and obey; he ſpeaketh to the light as if it were a reaſonable creature, he commandeth it not to ſhine, and it ſhineth not. The hoſts of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth are at the diſpoſe of God; the whole courſe of nature moves and ſtands ſtill at his word and pleaſure. The Sun ſtood ſtill in the dayes of *Joſhua* at his command; and by the ſame command, the Sun went backward in the days of *Hezekiah*; and 'tis by his command that the Sun withdraws its light, and is muffled up with Clouds at any time. *He commandeth it not to ſhine.*

Take theſe Inferences from it.

Firſt, *Then, what cannot God do?* He that commands the light not to ſhine, and it ſhineth not; Is any thing too hard for him? who but God can ſtop the Sun from ſhining? If all the Princes and Potentates of this world ſhould joyn their forces, their counſels together, and ſend a prohibition to the Sun, to ſtay its light, and forbear its ſhining one moment, they were not able to do it; yet if the Lord do but ſpeak the word, the Sun ſhineth not; he can give it a prohibition, and ſuperſede the going forth of its light to us: yea, he hath power enough, not only to cover the Sun with Clouds, but to turn it into a Cloud, and to blot it out of the heavens.

Secondly, learn hence, *In what dependance we are upon God for every thing.* God can keep the light from us every day if he pleaſeth, and wrap us up in perpetual darkneſs, as he plagued the Land of *Egypt* with thick darkneſs for three dayes together. 'Tis true, the Sun riſeth and goeth down in a natural courſe, yet ſtill by

by a divine order and commiſſion. As God can forbid the Light by interpoſing Clouds, ſo he can forbid the Clouds to give us ſhowers, and bind up all the ſweet influences of heaven from diſtilling upon the earth to make it fruitful. He can ſpeak to our garments that they warm us not, to our food that it nouriſh us not, to our phyſick that it cure and heal us not, to all our relations that they comfort us not, to all our poſſeſſions and riches that they content us not. O let us remember that we depend upon God for Rain, for Light, for Sun-ſhine, for all; it is at his word that they all put themſelves forth to do us good, and at his word they are all ſtaid and ſtopt in their motion, from doing or bringing us any good.

Let us remember alſo God can command another light not to ſhine; he can by a word ſtop the progreſs of the Word, and ſtay that bleſſed and moſt beautiful light, the light of the Goſpel, from ſhining to us, by ſome Cloud or other coming between. How many nations of people, where that light ſometimes ſhined, hath God long ſince ſent a command, and it ſhineth not! It ſhined brightly in former Ages upon the *African* Churches, but now, for a long time, God hath ſaid to the light of the Goſpel, ſhine not upon them; there's ſcarce any light at all, at moſt but a glimmering of Goſpel-Light in all that vaſt continent, a quarter-part of the world. What mighty Dominions are now poſſeſt by the followers of *Mahomet*, both in *Europe* and *Aſia*, where the light of the Goſpel did once ſhine very brightly and gloriouſly! How famous were thoſe ſeven *Aſian* Churches, men ioned and writ to by the command of Chriſt, and the miniſtry of his ſervant and Secretary *John* (*Rev.* 1. 2, 3.) yet now darkneſs poſſeſſeth all thoſe places, and the *Alcoran* hath thruſt out the Goſpel; and whence is all this? Surely God commanded, and that light ſhined not, nor hath it ſhined with any brightneſs for many hundred years. Jeſus Chriſt, who threatened *Epheſus* with the removal of her Candleſtick, hath removed all thoſe Candleſticks, and put out their light. The ſame ſtop can God give to the Goſpel-light which hath ſhined among us (bleſſed be his Name) for many years together: Let us take heed that we forfeit not that bleſſed light, that we provoke not the Lord by our abuſe of it and unthankfulneſs for it, to ſend out a command, that it ſhine not among us any more. We read in the Prophets how divine light

was

was prohibited both to the People and to the Prophets: The ſtop of it to the People, we have (*Amos* 8.9.) *I will cauſe the Sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day.* The Prophet ſpeaks not here at all of the ſtop of natural light, nor doth he only intend the ſtop of that metaphorical light, Proſperity in outward things, which the Lord doth often eclipſe and darken, when men dream leaſt of it, or have no more fear about it, than they have that the Sun will go down at noon day; but he, at leaſt, intends, if it be not his principal intendment, to ſhew that a grievous judgment was haſtning upon them, as to their ſpiritual enjoyments; that the light of divine knowledge, what to believe, and what to practiſe, was declining, and ready to go down, though they thought it was but noon with them, and the day very clear. For as the famine threatned (*verſ.* 11.) is expounded upon the place, by the Prophet himſelf, not to be *a famine of bread, and a thirſt for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord*; ſo the darkneſs threatened in this 9th verſe, is not to be reſtrained to the loſs of their worldly liberties and comforts, but extended to thoſe which were ſpiritual and divine, the failing of viſion, and the removing of the light of the Word. And as in this Prophet we find the light departing from the People, ſo in the third of *Micah* (*verſ.* 6, 7.) we find God commanding the light not to ſhine to the Prophets (the falſe prophets he meanes there, for ſo he deſcribeth them, *verſ.* 5.) *Therefore ſhall night be unto you* (the prophets who deceive my people, who teach them vanity, and lead them to Idolatry and ſuperſtition; *therefore*, I ſay, *ſhall night be unto you) that ye ſhall have no viſion, and it ſhall be dark to you that you ſhall not divine, and the Sun ſhall go down over the Prophets, and the day ſhall be dark over them.* What the Lord means by all this, you have expreſt in the cloſe of the 7th verſe, *There is no anſwer of God*, that is, God doth not now any more manifeſt his mind and will by the Prophets, that they might manifeſt his will unto the People. I cloſe this point with the renewal of my former admonition; Let us therefore take heed we provoke not the Lord to command this light not to ſhine, either to Prophets or People, in our Horizon.

Thirdly, *He commandeth it not to ſhine by the Cloud that cometh between.* Though (as I ſaid) the word *Cloud*, be not expreſt in the text, yet we know 'tis a Cloud that uſually cometh between the light and us. Hence

Hence note;

Though God can do all things by his bare word, yet he ordinarily uſeth means to bring about his purpoſes, whether for good or evil, whether in mercy or in judgement, to the children of men.

There is ſomething comes between. God hath a Cloud, or ſomewhat like it, to put between us and the light. The Apoſtle (2 *Theſ.* 2. 6, 7.) treating of Antichriſt, the man of ſin, intimates, that he would have filled the world with the darkneſs of errour and ſuperſtition very quickly, by a full diſcovery of himſelf, had not ſomething with-held him, had not ſomething come between him and his deſign for a time. What was that? 'Tis generally conceived, that which did with-hold or come between the man of ſin, and his purpoſe of filling the world with the darkneſs of his wicked errours and abominable worſhip, was the power of the *Roman* Empire at that time; Antichriſt could not put forth his power while that power ſtood in its ſtrength. God could have with-held Antichriſt immediately from putting forth of himſelf, but he ſaw it beſt to put a block in his way, the power of the *Roman* Empire, and until that was thruſt out of the way, *the man of ſin* could never ſhew himſelf fully, in that unlimited exerciſe of his ſinful power. Now, I ſay, as there was then a with-holder of Antichriſtian darkneſs, ſomewhat that came between and hindred its effectual working; ſo uſually, I may ſay univerſally, ſomewhat comes between to check and ſtop the courſe of the Goſpel-light, or of any other mercy. Sin is a Cloud of our making, and God in judgement makes that as a Cloud coming between us and our mercies. He did ſo of old to *Iſrael*, and he told them ſo by his Prophet (*Jer.* 5. 25.) *Your ſins have with-holden good things from you.* Sin with-holds good things, not formally, but mereritoriouſly, that is, ſin is the meriting or deſerving cauſe of their with-holding. This one Cloud of our ſins, brings all the Clouds of trouble between us and our mercies; and the Lord hath alwayes ſome Cloud or other of trouble at hand, in readineſs to cover the light, that it ſhine not to us, when we trouble and grieve him by thoſe foggy and filthy clouds of our ſins. Thus far of that which is preparatory to rain, *Clouds covering the light.* It followeth,

τὸ κατέχον verſ. 6.

ὁ κατέχων, v. 7

Verſ.

Verſ. 33. *The noiſe thereof ſheweth concerning it, the cattel alſo concerning the vapour.*

Hic verſus difficillimus eſt ſi quis in toto Jobo, in quo quot ſunt expoſitores tot fere ſenſus aſſeruntur. Merc.

רעו *Strepitus ejus quidam deducunt a* רוע *ſonuit, clamavit, vociferatus eſt, alii a* רעה *arcuit, ſcius.*

This Verſe, according to our tranſlation, as I touched before, carrieth on the ſame thing. There we had the preparation as it were, for rain, Clouds gathered and covering the Sun, ſo making dark weather: Now, ſaith he, that the rain is coming, *the noiſe thereof ſheweth concerning it.* The word which we render *noiſe*, taken from one root ſignifieth any troubleſome clamour; and as derived from another root, it ſignifieth a friend or companion (as I ſhall touch afterward) But at preſent leaving that, I ſhall open it according to our own reading, as it ſignifieth a *noiſe*. Some read *his noiſe*, that is, Gods noiſe, he maketh a noiſe in the air: And this noiſe of God in the air, is either, firſt, the noiſe of the wind; winds often fore-run great raines; or ſecondly, the noiſe of thunderclaps, that rattling noiſe heard from the clouds, which come betweene us and the light; this noiſe *ſheweth concerning it*, that is, this ſheweth fowl weather is coming, or that rain (as we ſpeak) is brewing in the Clouds. Both the bluſtering winds and the rattling roaring thunder tell us afore-hand, and give warning, that the weather will ſuddenly change, or that rain is at hand.

Hence Note;

God by natural ſigns gives warning of a change in natural things.

When God is about to ſend rain, the noiſe that is in the Clouds tells the world that 'tis coming. Some are very skilful in obſerving theſe things; ſuch we call, *weatherwiſe*. From this I would only infer, If God doth fore-ſhew or give ſigns of the change that he makes in natural things, then ſurely he doth much more give his people warning of the changes he is about to make in civil things, in the States and Kingdomes of this world. There are ſome things which do, as it were, predict or fore-ſhew ſuch and ſuch changes neer, if we were wiſe to obſerve them. The *Jewes* were very inquiſitive to know of Chriſt the ſigns of the times; Theſe ſigns they enquired of him, not ſo much out of curioſity (which had been bad enough) as out of treachery, to intrap him in his words, yet mark what Chriſt ſaid to them (*Math.* 16. 1, 2, 3.) *He anſwered and ſaid unto them, when it is evening, ye ſay it will be fair weather, for the ſkie is red* (a red

(a red ſkie ſhewes concerning fair weather) *and in the morning it will be foul weather, for the ſkie is red and lowring.* When the ſkie lowres, or, as here in *Job*, when the Cloud cometh between us and the light, that tells us it will be foul weather. Now, ſaith Chriſt, do you think that God hath given us ſuch warnings about changes in natural things, and hath he not given ſigns which may fore-ſhew changes in other things, which more concerns us? Therefore Chriſt checks them in the 3d verſe, *O ye hypocrites, ye can diſcern the face of the ſkie, and can ye not diſcern the Signs of the times*, that is, what changes God will make in the times? As if he had ſaid, if you were wiſe ye might diſcern the ſigns of ruine approaching to you and your City. A dreadful black Cloud of deſtruction hung over the City of *Jeruſalem* at that time, as Chriſt had fore-told them in ſeveral places of the Goſpel: the time is coming (ſaith he) when *there ſhall not be left one ſtone upon another*; yet you cannot ſee the ſigns of theſe things; you are very skilful to diſcern a fair day & a foul day (there are natural prognoſticks of theſe things) but ye hypocrites cannot diſcern the ſigns of the times: Do ye not think God hath given you warning, hath he not fore-ſhewed what he will do with you and with this City? if ye were wiſe ye might underſtand that ſhortly it will be overthrown, and ſo it was by *Titus Veſpatian* not long after. God gives as clear ſigns of the changes that ſhall be in times, as he doth concerning the change of the weather: And that's one thing which doth very much fore-ſhew it, when God puts it into the hearts of his Miniſters unanimouſly to fore-warn approaching troubles. Such warnings were given to *Hieruſalem*, not only by Chriſt, but afterward by others. *Joſephus* in his Hiſtory reports of one that could not by any puniſhment be ſtopt from crying up and down the City, for ſeveral years, after this manner, *A voyce from the eaſt, a voyce from the weſt, a voyce from the four windes, a voyce againſt Jeruſalem, and a voyce againſt the Temple.* There was alſo (as the ſame Author reports) a voyce heard in the Temple, *Let us depart hence.* The Jewes generally would not believe theſe voyces, but went on and were angry when any told them of a Cloud coming over their day, yet they found them all verified in the ſubverſion of their city, by the *Romans*. Such fore-warnings were given the *Palatinate*, and other parts of *Germany*, before thoſe great evils came upon them. Some way or other God

Joſephus, lib. 7. c. 12. *de Bello Judaico.*

hath alwayes shewed when these showres were coming; and when a people grow weary of their warnings, when they grow more prophane and wicked under them, this is a sure sign, a fatal prognostick, that God is coming with a showre of wrath, and is ready to pour down a storm of vengeance upon them. And surely these warnings, both with respect to natural changes in the Air, and civil changes in the affairs of this World, argue the wonderful goodness of God, that he would have us prepare for all dispensations: He will not send a showre of rain, but would have us prepared for it; and when he is about to send those great showrs of Judgment upon the world, he would have his people ready and prepared, and therefore by some means or other he tells them before hand what is at hand.

מקנה *Pecus.* Thus, the noyse thereof sheweth concerning it, or telleth us the storm is coming. But is there nothing else that fore-tels this? Yes, it followeth,

The cattel also concerning the vapour.

The very beast of the field give notice of the vapour. The Hebrew is *that which goeth up*, so we read in the margin. The rain comes down, and the vapours go up; and the going up of the vapour is an argument of the coming down of the rain. As the noise or thunder in the Clouds fore-sheweth a storm, so *the cattel concerning the vapour*, they tell us the rain is coming down by their apprehension of the vapour which goeth up. עלה־עולה

Some render, not *vapour*, but *plants* or *herbs*, *trees* or *grass*, these go up or ascend out of the earth, as well as vapours. Our translation is plain. *The cattel also*, the very sheep and oxen, yea the fowles of the air will tell when we shall have foul weather; before such storms come usually they run to shelter, hiding and shifting for themselves as well as they can, against the storm. *Cattel presage rain. Pliny* in his Natural History speaks much of the natural sagacity that is in beasts, swine, sheep and oxen, whereby they perceive change of weather. The Poet *Virgil* also verifies largely and accurately of these things; reporting how husbandmen that keep cattel will gather by what they see in the cattel what thew eather will be. *The cattel also concerning the vapour.*

Plinius, lib. 18. c. 35. Natural History. Virgilius, in Georg. l. 1.

Hence

Hence Note;

Brute Creatures, by a natural instinct, perceive the approaching changes of the weather.

And why hath God given them that natural instinct? Why are they quick-sented and quick sighted, yea many times more quick-sighted than men are? Surely, it is first, that those poor Creatures may provide themselves of shelter, and not be abroad in the storm, rain or wind, in a time of danger, or inconvenient to them. This may be of use to us. God would teach us by the very dumb Creatures, the Brutes, what our duty is; the Cattel, the Swine, the Sheep will witness against us, if we do not take notice of, nor observe, the signs of the various dispensations of God, or when he is about to vary his dispensations. Can the Cattel tell when it will be fowl weather, and are men so stupid (are they especially that profess the Gospel so stupid) that they understand none of these things? The Prophet *Jeremiah* (*Chap.* 8. 7.) reproves the people of *Israel* upon this account, by the fowles of heaven (as was shewed upon another occasion, at the 11th Verse of the 35th Chapter) *The Stork in the heavens knoweth his appointed time, and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow know the times of their coming*; that is, they will not stay in any place, where it is not fit nor safe for them to stay, and they will not come to any place till they know all things are suitable and ready for them: *But my people knoweth not the judgment of their God*, they are more senseless than the very fowls of heaven in this. And therefore the prophet checks them (*v.* 8.) *How do ye say, we are wise, and the Law of the Lord is with us*? You count your selves very wise, yet ye are not so wise in this matter as the Stork and the Crane, and the Swallow, for they observe their times, but you do not. It is a great part of our wisdom to see what God is doing, or what he is about to do before he doth it. It is said (*Prov.* 22. 3.) *A prudent man foreseeth an evil.* When evil is come every one can see it (though some will scarce see it then, as the Prophet complained (*Isa.* 26. 11.) *When thy hand is lifted up they will not see it*) but usually that which is done or doing we can see; when we feel an evil we can see it; but the prudent, that is the godly man, fore-seeth the evil. How comes he to fore-see it? not by any hellish divination, not by star-gazing, nor by asking the Devil what shall be hereafter, as *Saul* did; he would fore-see the evil,

but he went to the Devil, to a Witch for it (*1 Sam.* 28.) Now a godly man doth not fore-see the evil by any such wayes or means, but by a diligent collection of things, comparing one with the other, or by the connection of causes with their effects, and of antecedents with their consequents; by these he plainly fore-seeth that such or such an evil is coming, even as the beast fore-sees the storm is coming by the vapour, or that which goeth up. The prudent man fore-seeth an evil approaching by way of argument. For thus he reasons, if God be an unchangable God, if he be as holy, as just, as powerful, as zealous, as jealous now, as ever he was, and if sin be the same as ever it was, if sin be as foul in it self, if it be as loathsome and as burthensome to God, if it be as pernicious and hurtful to man now, as ever it was, then surely when men run such and such sinful courses, such and such will be the effects, such and such the fruits. Thus a prudent man seeth the effect in the cause, the consequent in the antecedent. This was *Solomons* purpose, when he said (*Eccles.* 2. 14.) *The wise mans eyes are in his head.* You may say, so are the fools eyes too; Where are his eyes else? But when *Solomon* saith, *The wise mans eyes are in his head*, his meaning is, they are there to purpose; the wise man well observes and marks how things go, and whither things tend, he considers how things go, and whither things are going; *but the fool walketh in darkness*, that is, he walketh as if he had no eyes in his head, as if his eyes were in his heels, not in his head. It is said, (*1 Chron.* 12. 32.) concerning the men of *Issachar*, *They were wise concerning the times, and to know what Israel ought to do*: They knew what the times required, and what God required in those times, what special duties were incumbent upon them, from the dispensations of God. It is a great mercy, and a great part of our wisdom to be thus wise, and if we are not, we shall be found and judged more brutish than the brute beast, for the Cattel also give *warning concerning the vapour*, they give notice when rain and storms are coming.

Thus I have held out the sence of the words, as they are laid down plainly in our translation.

But there are very many differences among Interpreters (as was hinted before) in the reading and rendring of these words; all which arise from some difficulty in the Gramatical construction and copious signification of the Hebrew text. I might give you

you more than three and three several interpretations of these words, but, as I said before, I should rather perplex the Reader than confirm him; yet I shall name three, when I have only shewed which words in the text occasion this variety in translation. First, the word rendred by us *Clouds*, signifieth also *the hands*. Secondly, the word rendred *cometh between*, signifieth *an Interceſſor*, or *one that prayeth*, as also an *opposer*, who stands up against and resists the force of another. Thirdly, the word rendred *noise* signifieth (when derived from another root) a friend or familiar. Fourthly, the word rendred *cattel*, signifieth also *possession*, or that which is possessed, and taken from another root, *emulation* or *strife*. Fifthly, the word which we translate as an Adverbe, *also*, signifieth likewise *anger*. Sixthly, the word rendred *vapour*, signifieth *an ascension*, or going up; and so *plants or herbs*, which grow out of the ground and ascend into the air according to their growth, are elegantly expressed by it.

All these differences found in the single tearms, are made use of by Interpreters, as will appear while I give you a taste of three different translations.

First, The common Latine translator renders thus, *In his hands he hideth the Light, and commands it to come again; he speaks of it, or declares it to his friend, that it is his possession, and that he may ascend or come to it.* This rendring is marvelous different from ours, yet there is some footing for it in the Original, and it may receive a useful sense.

The whole text being accordingly expounded as an argument of Gods great favour to godly men; from whom, though he at any time hideth the light, yet, tis but for a time, he commands it to return again, and tells them as his friends, light is their possession, and that at last they shall ascend up into light.

There is a second Classis of Interpreters, who expound these two Verses wholly as a description of the Clouds meeting together and assaulting one another, like two great Champions and Warriors in battel. The learned *Beza* translates the first part of the 33d Verse conformably to the Vulgar Latine last spoken of, *He hideth the light in either hand, or both hands*; and the latter part of that Verse, together with the whole 33d Verse, in conformity to the sense now given; *He gives it* (namely the light or Lightening) *command concerning that which meets or comes against*

In utraque vola occultat lucem, & præcipit ei super occurrente.

Judicat hoc tumultus ejus æmulatio & ira adversus ascendentem. Bez.

it

it (namely where and how to receive the force or charge of the other cloud that is ready to assault it) *the noise, the strife, the anger of it against the ascender* (or cloud coming up) *plainly declareth this.* Some of the Jewish Doctors insist much in the description of this conflict between the Clouds above, and the ascending Clouds, concerning which the reader may consult them for further information; but the difficulties of this translation noted by Modern Expositers, especially by *Mercer* and *Merlin*, are so many that it may suffice to name it.

Thirdly, Mr. *Broughton*, thus, *By hands he covereth the light, and chargeth it as man doth pray, declaring his favour towards him, the cattel and also plants.* The meaning is (which several others follow in translating and opening this context) That when God covereth the light or causeth darkness, yet at the intercession or prayer of his people he makes a change and causeth great serenity, giving comfortable times, & thereby declaring his favour towards them, yea, and towards the cattel and the plants, which feed upon ascend or grow up out of the earth. *Junius* contents fully with this sense, whose Translation and glosis upon it I shall present the reader, and submit all to his judgment and consideration; *With his hands he hideth the light* (that is, he makes it dark as laying his hand upon it) *and he forbids it* (namely his hand to hide the light any longer) *because of him that intercedeth* (that is, *Noah* in the time of the general flood, and the Godly, who according to the example of *Noah* come to God, *Jam.* 5. 16.) *declaring towards him* (that is, the Godly man praying and worshiping God) *his good will, yea, towards the cattel and fruits of the earth.*

These are the most eminent conceptions which I find upon the text; all of them containing truths, and such as may occasion useful meditations. But I rather adhere to our own version, in which, as the power of God in changing the weather is held our, so his goodness in giving signs and warnings of it, both by the noises which we hear in the air, and by some unusual actions and motions, which we may see among Cattel here upon the earth.

JOB,

JOB, Chap. 37. Vers. 1, 2.

1. *At this also my heart trembled, and it moved out of its place.*
2. *Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth.*

THis Chapter concludes the Conference of *Elihu* with *Job*, and it consists of three parts.

First, In it we have an enumeration, together with a description of divers Meteors, or wonderful works of God in the Air, Thunder and Lightning, Snow and Rain; yet before *Elihu* speaks of them, he doth two things by way of Preface, to lead us with more reverence towards God, into that discourse of Nature, in which much of God appeareth.

First, *Elihu* tells us, how himself was affected, either with the present sense, or with the fore-apprehention of those things concerning which he was about to speak; *At this also my heart trembled, and it moved out of its place.*

Secondly, He stirs up the whole Auditory then present, and all others, to a diligent attention and serious consideration of them. Vers. 2. *Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth.*

Having spoken thus in way of Preface, *Elihu* proceeds, first, to a description of Thunder, with its immediate fore-runner, as to our sence (the eye being quicker to receive its object than the ear) though in truth, and according to reason, its companion, *the Lightning*, in the three Verses following (3, 4, 5,) concerning both which he shewes,

First, that they go not at random, but have a guide, *he directs eth it*, that is, the Thunder and Lightning.

Second-

Secondly, He shews the extent of their motion and Gods direction, they are not confined to this or that part, *He directeth it under the whole heaven*, and his *lightnings unto the ends of the earth*, in the same Verse.

Thirdly, He speakes of the irrevocableness of Gods decrees and orders about them, at the 4th Verse, *After it a voice roareth*, &c. *and he will not stay them when his voice is heard.*

Fourthly, He concludes about these and many other works of God, with an Elogie of all his works. First, In their greatness; Secondly, In their incomprehensibleness; or he concludes them, not only great, but wonderful and incomprehensible (Vers. 5.) *God thundereth marvelously with his voice, he doth great things which we cannot comprehend.*

Having thus spoken of Thunder and Lightning, he proceeds,

Secondly, To shew the power of God, which he describes in Snow and Rain.

First, from their efficient cause, at the 6th Verse.

Secondly, By their effects. First, Towards men, in the 7th Verse. Secondly, Upon or towards irrational Creatures, the Beasts of the earth, at the 8th Verse.

Thirdly, He sets forth the Power of God in the Winds, concerning which we have,

First, Their original, whence they come (Vers. 9.)

Secondly, Their effects, or what they produce, cold and frost, in the latter part of the 9th and 10th Verses.

Fourthly, He treats of the Clouds, and about them he declares four things.

First, The melting or dissolving of them into Rain, at the 11th Verse.

Secondly, The scattering and dispersing of them by the wind, in the latter part of that Verse.

Thirdly, The disposing and ordering of them by the counsel and command of God, at the 12th Verse.

Fourthly, Their uses, ends and operations, at the thirteenth Verse.

Thus we have the first general part of the Chapter opened, containing a description of the Meteors, or manifold works of God in the Air, all which hold forth and advance his mighty power and righteous administrations in this world, towards

wards the children of men; which was the poynt that *Elihu* had laboured in all along, and undertaken to demonstrate.

In the second part of this Chapter, *Elihu* (upon the whole matter) gives *Job* serious counsel and admonition, wherein,

First, He stirs him up to consider these wonderful works of God, at the 14th verse.

Secondly, He asserts and urgeth the weakness and inability of *Job* (or indeed of any man) to understand them fully; this he doth,

First, In general, at the beginning of the 15th verse, *Dost thou know when God disposed them?* &c.

Secondly, More particularly, in their several kinds.

First, *Of the Rainbow*, at the latter end of that 15th verse, *and caused the light of his Cloud to shine.*

Secondly, Of the Clouds and their various motions, at the 16th verse.

Thirdly, Of the heat according to the wind (vers. 17.)

Fourthly, Of the Heaven or Skie (vers. 18.)

All which were such as he could not give a clear account of, and therefore at the 19th verse, *Elihu* bids *Job* do it if he could, as for himself he durst not venture upon it (verse. 20.) nor can any (saith he vers. 21. 22.) see far into these natural things, or into the nature of these things. These are the special poynts of his admonition to *Job*; and from these he passeth to the

Third Part, or Conclusion of the Chapter, and of his whole discourse with *Job*; wherein,

First, He makes a recapitulation of, or sums up all that he had said of the unsearchableness of God in his works; this he doth in the former part of the 23d verse.

Secondly, He sets down positively what God is, in a three-fold Excellency.

First, Of Power.

Secondly, Of Judgment.

Thirdly, Of plentiful Justice, at the middle of the 23d verse.

Thirdly, He tells us what God will not do, at the end of the 23d verse, *He will not afflict*; and from all, makes two inferences at the the 24th verse.

First, That *therefore men ought to honour and to fear him.*

Secondly, That therefore God is not in the reverence nor fear

of any man, in the close of that 24th verse; *He respecteth not any that are wise of heart.*

Thus I have given a prospect of the whole Chapter. Now to particulars, beginning with those two verses by which *Elihu* leads in his discourse of those wonderful workes of God.

First, By shewing how himself was affected with them.

Secondly, By calling upon others to be affected as himself was.

לואת Propter hoc.

Vers. 1. *At this also my heart trembled.*

At this, that is, by reason of this, or for this cause, or because of this; so the word is rendred (*Gen.* 2. 23.) *She* (said *Adam* of his wife, or *Second-self*) *shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.* So here, at this, or for this cause, *my heart trembleth.* It may here be questioned, what it was at which the heart of *Elihu* trembled? I shall give a double answer to that querie.

First, Some conceive that while *Elihu* was speaking about, or about to speak further of that marvelous work of God, *the Thunder*, God, to confirm what he had said, or should say, at that very instant caused it to thunder, that so *Job* might be in a more humble reverential frame, and so the better prepared to receive what *Elihu* had further to say unto him. That there was a storm at or about that time, may appear from the first verse of the 38th Chapter; *then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said;* and we find that God hath often given great discoveries of himself in or by Thunder and Lightning. In Thunder and Lightning the Law was delivered to *Moses* on mount *Sinai* (*Exod.* 19. 6.) And to affect the people of *Israel*, when they had provoked God by their peremptory and discontented way of asking a King, *Samuel* coming to deal with them about it (1 *Sam.* 12. 16, 17, 18.) said, *Stand and see this great thing, which the Lord will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat-harvest to day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send Thunder and Rain, that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great. And the Lord sent Thunder and Rain that day*, even while *Samuel* was speaking, for their conviction and humiliation, as the next words shew, *and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel.* Thus possibly while *Elihu* was about to speak of Thunder, for the humbling of *Job*, God commanded it to Thunder for his deeper humiliation: and if so, the cause why *Elihu* trembled is apparent enough; The terrible Thunder-claps which

which then rent the Clouds and even shook the earth, might well cause him to tremble.

Secondly, We may understand these words (*at this my heart trembleth*) with reference to the whole matter which *Elihu* had before him; what he had begun to speak, and was further to speak of Gods dreadful power, might shake his heart with astonishment. The due apprehensions of the greatness of God, may soon strike man into a fit of trembling; it did *Job*, as himself confessed at the 21th Chapter of this Book (v. 5, 6.) *Mark ye, and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth; for when I remember, I am afraid, and trembling takes hold of my flesh:* As if he had said, while I duly consider the great things that I have spoken, & those greater things (if greater may be) that I am about to speak, I cannot but tremble, and stand as one filled with astonishment. How was the Apostle *Paul* amazed at that most mysterious dispensation of God in casting off his ancient people the *Jewes*, the seed of *Abraham* his friend, for so long a time! (*Rom.* 11. 33.) *O the Depth!* &c. *At this my heart trembleth*, that is, I am heartily afraid.

Quoties mihi divinæ majestatis abyssus in mentem venerit, expavescit cor meum, &c. Brent.

חרד Motus, commotus fuit corpore aut anima, ex cura aut metu mali. ἐ τρόμος. Sept.

The *heart* is here put for the whole inner man, or for all the powers of the soul; and the word rendered to *tremble*, notes a disturbance of the whole man, both of soul and body. the Septuagint render it by the same Greek word used (*Math.* 2. 3.) where (upon the wise mens coming from the East, to inquire concerning the King of the *Jewes*) it is said, *When Herod heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.* That news of a new King put them into a grievous fright, they knew not what to make of it, nor which way to turn themselves, in such a turn of affaires, in such a new world as that new-born King might make. This word is else-where in Scripture used to note the suddenest surprize and the strongest possession of fear. Thus when *Isaac*, through the subtilty of *Rebekah*, had given the blessing to *Jacob* which he intended for *Esau*, 'tis said, that upon the appearance of his mistake, *he trembled exceedingly* (*Gen.* 27. 33.) Doubtless it did wonderfully astonish the good old man, to think, that God should carry him beyond and beside his own purpose, to bless the yonger brother instead of the elder. This strange disappointment by the overruling providence of God, put him to a stand, and troubled his thoughts more than a little; especially, because he was now taught, that by his carnal affections to *Esau*, he was running quite cross to

the mind of God, revealed (Chap. 25. 33.) Read the ſame force of the word (*Exod.* 19. 16.) to which the Apoſtle referring, ſaith (*Heb.* 12. 21.) *So terrible was the ſight, that Moſes ſaid, I exceedingly fear and quake.* Read alſo the ſame importance of the word 1 *Sam.* 4. 13. Chap. 14. 15. Such was the Condition of *Elihu*, he was deeply affected, trembling took hold of him. The Spirits run to the heart in a time of fear, or upon a ſudden ſight, as Chizens to the Caſtle in a day of danger; and then the outward members (being deſerted by the ſpirits) grow cold and tremble. There is a natural infirmity called, *The palpitation or trembling of the heart*; But this of *Elihu* was ſupernatural, at leaſt, ſome-what more then natural, as ariſing either from the conſideration of what God had done, or of what himſelf was about to ſpeak; and not only did his heart tremble, *but*

Was moved out of its place.

Which is added to ſet forth the exceeding greatneſs of that fear which ſeized upon him. The Text ſpeaks as if his heart *were indeed removed* or taken out of his body. It is uſual in Scripture to affirm that as done which is like to be done. The ſhip was ſaid to be broken (*John* 1. 4.) and the net (Luke 5. 6.) becauſe both were in eminent danger of breaking. We ſay of a man in great fear, his heart is ready to leap out of or out at his mouth. One of the Ancients renders here, *my heart is pluckt out*; the ſeptuagint, *It floweth out*; the *Chaldee* paraphraſe, takes up the former expreſſion; *my heart leaps or jumps*, which as it doth ſometimes for joy, ſo often for fear, or at the unexpected appearance of danger. Some conceive by this moving of his heart out of his place, that *Elihu* was in a kind of extaſie, that he was, as it were, carried out of himſelf, upon the hearing of that dreadful voice of God, the thunder; taking it ſo.

Note,

Thunder is a terrible thing;

It hath made and may make the ſtouteſt heart to tremble. One of Chriſts Apoſtles was called *Lebbeus* (*Mat.* 10. 3.) as much as to ſay, the *hearty man*, or *all-heart*; Now he that is *Lebbeus* a man of the greateſt courage, the moſt hearty man, may be put to a tremble at this, when he heares it thunder. Heathens have ſpoken much of this, and by a peculiar word have called thoſe who are much amazed

Cordis palpitatio & totius animæ concurſus ad cor in favoribus exiſtens eſt. Galen. *a'πiδνη, Effluxus.* Sept. *Evulſum eſt.* Auguſt. *Emotum eſt.* Hieron. *Silui ſeu ſubſtitit.* Tharg. *Hâc verbi expreſſam quem Græci Exſtaſin vocant, ſatis denotari, quæ (ut aſſolet cauſam) admirationem cum pavore ſubſequi ſolet.* Bold. *---Et humanas motura tenuia mentes.* Ovid. 1. Met.

amazed *men thunderſtruck*, men being ſo much amazed at the ſound of thunder. The *Roman* Hiſtorian reports of that great Emperour, who commanded all the world, and made the nations to tremble, that yet he himſelf trembled *at this*. *Auguſtus Cæſar*, was ſo afraid of thunder, that when-ever he travelled abroad, he cauſed the skin of a Sea Calfe to be carried about with him, becauſe it was in their ſuperſtition believed to be an Amulet or preſervative againſt any hurt by thunder. And the ſame Author tells us of another of that ranke, a heathen *Roman* Emperour, that was ſo afraid of thunder, that he would hide his head when he heard it, and ſometimes ran under a bed for ſhelter. I ſhall have further occaſion to ſpeak of the terribleneſs of thunder, at the 4th and 5th verſes; I touch it here, becauſe, according to our interpretation, this was it at which the heart of *Elihu trembled*.

Hos Lætinus, Attonitos vocat. Attonitus eſt, cui caſu vicini fulminis & ſoniti tonitruum dant ſtuporem. Serv: in tertium Æmid. *Tonitrus dici videtur a terrendo, quod conterreat hominem. Aliqui, a tono & ruendo, quia magno cum ſonitu fiat & ruat.* Suetonius de Auguſto & Caligula.

Secondly, Taking the words more generally, as this trembling might ariſe from the conſideration of any other of the wonderful works of God,

Note;

The great appearances of God in his power may and ſhould affect us even with feare and trembling.

The heart of man may wel move out of his place when he conſiders how dreadful God is in his place, and what wonders he both doth and can do. *David* caſting his eye up to the heavens and the hoſt of them (*Pſal.* 8.) concludes with admiration (v. 8.) *O Lord our God, how excellent is thy Name in all the world!* They who have but little knowledge of the works of God, cannot be much affected with them; they who know them deeply cannot, but be deeply affected with them. Fooles and ignorant perſons ſlight or lightly paſs by any thing that God doth or ſpeaks; but they who are wiſe hearted will lay both his Word and Works to heart, their hearts will tremble and be moved out of their place. Holy King *David* adviſeth the Kings and Judges of the earth to *ſerve the Lord with fear and to rejoyce with trembling* (Pſ. 2 11.) And the holy Apoſtle *Paul* exhorteth all Chriſtians *to work out their ſalvation with fear and trembling* (Philip. 2. 12.) Now if we are to tremble in our dayly ſervice, how much more under dreadful providences!

For the cloſe of this poynt, remember there is a four-fold trembling,

bling or moving of the heart at the appearances of God, or at the diſcoveries of his Power and Glory in his Word and in his Works.

Firſt, That which is natural. (*Iſa.* 7. 2.) *When it was told the houſe of David, ſaying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim*; his heart (that is, the heart of *Ahaz.*) *was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the Wood are moved with the wind.* And when *Felix* heard *Paul reaſoning of righteouſneſs, temperance, and the judgment to come, he trembled:* The Judge trembled at the voyce of the priſoner. 'Tis natural for man to fear and tremble at the report of any truth which renders him guilty, or of any trouble which over-maſters his ability to withſtand or avoyd it.

Secondly, There is a Legal trembling, proceeding from a ſpirit of bondage, or the dreadful apprehenſions of the wrath of God againſt ſin (*Rom.* 8. 15.) This in many is precedaneous to their true converſion, and, as a needle, makes way for the ſpirit of grace and adoption, by which thread they are united & faſtned unto God through faith, & walk in a child-like fear before him all their days.

Thirdly, There is a penal or judiciary fear and trembling. God in judgement ſometimes fills the heart of ſinful man with fear, as the puniſhment of his ſin. They who have no fear of God in their hearts to keep or over-aw them graciouſly from ſinning and living in a courſe of ſin, are delivered up to a ſpirit of fear, which continually purſueth them with dreadful apprehenſions of the wrath of God, and of ſome imminent and impendent evils, ready to fall upon them for their ſins; *A dreadful ſound is in their ears* (as *Eliphas* told *Job*, *Chap.* 15. 21.) yea, as he ſpeaks there (*verſ.* 24.) *trouble and anguiſh make him afraid; they prevail againſt him, as a King ready to battel.* The Lord threaten'd it as one of the ſore Judgments that he would bring upon his People the Jewes, for their diſobedience (*Deut.* 28. 65.) *I will give thee a trembling heart*; yea, he threaten'd (*Iſa.* 52. 17.) to give them the *dregs of the Cup of trembling*. *Ezekiel* (*Chap.* 12. 18.) was commanded *to tremble*, as a ſign to the People of that penal fear and trembling which God would ſend upon them. Such was that trembling ſpoken of (*Ezek.* 26. 16.) *Then all the Princes of the Sea ſhall come down from their Thrones, and lay away their Robes, and put off their broidered garments, and ſhall cloath themſelves with tremblings.* Doubtleſs they had little mind to ſuch change of rayment, they had rather have been cloathed with raggs; but the Lord would make them do it. And as thoſe confederate Princes or friends of *Tirus* ſhould cloath themſelves with trembling, ſo 'tis propheſied (*Zech.* 12. 2.) that *Jeruſalem ſhould be, not only a burthenſome ſtone, but a cup of trembling to all her enemies.* As if the Lord had ſaid, This ſhall be their puniſhment who would make my *Jeruſalem* tremble, I will make them tremble at the remembrance of *Jeruſalem*, or at the ſight of thoſe great things which I will do againſt them, and for *Jeruſalem*.

Fourthly, There is a ſpiritual, a gracious trembling and moving of the heart; that's it which this point calls us to, and to which, in thoſe places lately mentioned, both *David* (*Pſal.* 2. 11.) and the Apoſtle (*Phil.* 2. 12.) call us to. It was well with *Ephraim*, when it was thus with him (*Hoſ.* 13. 1.) *When Ephraim ſpake trembling he was exalted*, that is, when he was in a trembling, humble, ſelf-denying frame, he proſpered, and all things ſucceeded well with him. The Lord is never better pleaſed with us, than when he ſees us in theſe tremblings (*Iſay.* 66. 2.) *To him will I look that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word*; Theſe trembling ones are the men that God hath an eye upon and reſpect unto. The prophet *Habakkuk* ſpake of himſelf (*Chap.* 3. 16.) much like *Elihu* in the text, *When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice*, &c. The prophet fore-ſaw a day of trouble, and trembled at it, and this gave him aſſurance that he ſhould not tremble when he ſaw it, for (ſaid he in the next words) *I trembled in my ſelf that I might reſt in the day of trouble.* The more we tremble in our ſelves, the more reſt we have in God. None have ſo little fear when trouble comes, as they who fear before it comes. *Noah, by faith moved by fear, prepared an arke to the ſaving of his houſe* (*Heb.* 11. 7.) Thus to fear a flood is the beſt way to eſcape it. 'Tis not courage, but ſtupidity, not to fear and tremble, when we hear of the judgments of God. They who tremble graciouſly ſhall never tremble deſpairingly. *At this my heart trembleth*, &c.

Elihu having thus ſhewed how himſelf was affected, with a gracious fear and trembling, labours to affect others alſo with the ſame fear, in the next verſe.

Verſ. 2. *Hear attentively the noiſe of his voice, and the ſound that goeth out of his mouth.*

We have here a doubling of the word in an unuſual way. That Hebraiſme

Plus est, inquit Rab. David, quam audiendo audite, nam infinitum postponitur; ego nihil aut parum refero puto, hoc an illo modo efferas. Drus.

Hebraisme is ordinarily read, *hearing hear*, but in this place, 'tis *hear in hearing*; which one of the Jewish Doctors saith, hath a greater emphasis than the ordinary Hebraisme *hearing hear*. Others find nothing of such a difference in those differing Heb aismes: however both call for greatest heed in hearing what is spoken, when 'tis either said *hear in hearing*, or *hearing hear*; we should, as our translation gives the sense fully,

Hear attentively.

There is a two-fold hearing.

First, A hearing with the ear of the body: there needs little stirring up of that ear to attend the voice of thunder here spoken of; that speaks so loud that men cannot (if they would not) but hear, that commands audience and attention, that boreth the ear and makes its own way. The deafest adders can hardly stop their eares so, as not to hear the voyce of that (not muttering charmer, but) but rouzing speaker, Thunder.

Secondly, There is a hearing with the ear of the mind, a spiritual hearing, such as the Prophet spake of (*Hab.* 3. 2.) *O Lord, I have heard thy speech*, &c. that is, I have heard it fully, clearly, understandingly, affectionately, obediently. *Elihu* is here stirring up, not so much the outward sence, as the affections, with all the powers of the inner man, to attend and take notice of that which was then to be heard; what was that? *Hear attentively*

Non solum audiendum exerat, sed intelligendum postulat.

The noise of his voice.

רגז *Commotio, perturbatio animi præ metu vel ira. Audite audiendo cum tremore vocem ejus.* Merc.

The word here rendred *noise*, signifies both an angry noise, and an awful fear (*Ps.* 4.4.) such a noise as causes fear, or such a fear as is caused by a dreadful noise; Hence some read the words, *Hear his voyce with trembling*; we say, *hear the noise of his voice.*

According to the former interpretation *the noise of his voice* is the noise of thunder; that, if any thing, makes a noise, a dreadful noise, as was toucht before, a noise like the roaring of a Lion. *Hear the noise*

קול *Omnem sonitum articulatum aut inarticulatum significat, Vox in genere quemque sonum.* Scapula.

Of his voice.

The word *voice* is taken in general for any sound, articulate or inarticulate (*Ezek.* 1.24.) and it may very well signifie thunder, because thunder in several scriptures is called absolutely, *A voice*, the

the voice of God, and whole volyes of Thunder are called *voices of God* (*Exod.* 9. 28.) *Pharaoh* entreated *Moses*, that he would entreat the Lord that there might be *no more mighty thundrings*, we put in the margin, *voyces of God*. It is said (*Exod.* 20. 18.) the people saw the *Thundrings*, the *Hebrew* is, *voices*; the meaning is, they heard the Thundrings, as if they had been so many voices, or they heard as it were voyces when it thundered. Thus 'tis said (*Rev.* 4. 5.) *Out of the Throne proceeded lightnings, and thundrings, and voices.* Again (Chap. 10. 3.) *seven thunders uttered their voyces. Hear attentively the noise of his voice*, that is, the noise of of his Thunder speaking aloud and aloft in the air.

And the sound that goeth out of his mouth.

The word imports secret, silent meditation, as also an audible sound by voice or words spoken; and it may be applyed particularly to that more gentle, quier, or whispering sound of thunder, of which I shall have occasion to speak further at the 4th verse. Some Thunders speak very loud, others give a kind of gentle sound. Philosophy tells us, that this difference in thunder ariseth from the different constitution of the clouds in which it is bred, and through which it breaks. The greater may more properly be expressed by the words in the first part of this verse, *The noise of his voice*, and the lesser by these in the latter part, *The sound that goeth out of his mouth.*

הגה *Sermo meditatus, proprie meditatio. Sermonem etiam significat ore prolatum.*

Now, Whether it be *the noise of his voice*, or *a whispering soft sound*, both or either must be attended; *Hear attentively the sound*

Tonitruorum unum genus est cujus sit grave murmur, aliud genus est acre, quod crepitum magis dixerim quam sonum, aliud strangor est subitus & vehemens quo edito concidunt homines, &c. Sen. l. 6. Nat. q. c. 27.

That goeth out of his mouth.

Thunder is said to go out of the mouth of God, as words go out of the mouth of man; and as men, especially the minds of honest men, are known by the words which go out of their mouths, so God maketh himself known to the world, or makes the world both know him and fear him in his power and greatness by the noise and sound of thunder.

Elihu chargeth *Job* to attend diligently *this noise, this sound*, and he calleth it the noise of Gods voice, the sound that goeth out of his mouth.

Hence observe, First;

God speaks to man in Thunder, or, *Thunder is the voice of God to man:*

Poetæ Jovem tonantem, & tonitrua vocem Jovis vocare solent.

And so 'tis often called in Scripture; the 29th *Psalme*, almost throughout, is a proof of it, Thunder being there seven times called, *The Voice of the Lord*. The very Heathens had that apprehension of Thunder, calling it, the Voice of the Gods. *Jupiter* was surnamed, *Thundring Jove*. Here we have *Jehovah*, the true God, the living God, sending out his Voice in Thunder. That Voice spoken of by *David* (*Psal.* 68. 33.) is usually interpreted of Thunder. *Lo, he doth send out his Voice, and that a mighty Voice.* Thunder may be called the Voice of God in a double respect.

Quod magnum & terribile esse dicitur.

First, Because it is a great and mighty voice; and then those words (*of God*) have only the force of an Epithete. As the *Cedars of God, the Rivers of God*, are great Cedars and Rivers, so a great Voice is called the Voice of God. God is great, and therefore great things are ascribed to him.

Secondly, Thunder is called the Voice of God, because God formes, and puts it forth by his power, as a man doth his voice. God may be said to utter his Voice when he sends out the Thunder: And as Thunder is put forth by, or speaks from God, so it puts forth, or speaks much of God, it speaks and puts forth much of the Power and Majesty of God. When it thunders, we should think we hear God, the God of glory speaking to us. Some will excuse themselves, they are ignorant, they have never been taught to know God: But did such never hear it thunder? that teacheth much of God, so much as will make them inexcusable, who obey him not, who tremble not at his Power and Majesty. Thunder calls for, and more, it commands, our fear of, our reverence and submission unto God, especially when God, together with this voice, sends his arrow, bolts or bullets, to do great things against his enemies, as he did against *Pharaoh* (*Exod.* 9. 23.) and against the *Philistines* (1 *Sam.* 7. 10) Yea, the Lord threatened to distress *Jerusalem* with *Thunder, and with Earth-quake, and with great noise* (*Isa.* 29. 6.) Now, if Thunder be the Voice of God, or the noise of his Voice, then take these brief Inferences from it.

First,

First, Let us see what a powerful and mighty God we have! When it thunders, every believing soul may say, *This is the Voice of my Father*; what cannot he do for me that can speak thus?

Adversus tonitrua & cælestium minas subterraneæ domus, & defossi in altum specus remedia sunt. Sen. lib. 6. Natur. quæst. cap. 4.

Secondly, If God hath such a dreadful Voice, if he thunder with his Voice, we should learn to secure, arm, and fence ourselves against the dread and danger of Thunder, by the actings of Faith in him, and of Repentance and godly Sorrow for our sinnings against him. Some of the Heathens have given pitiful counsel what to do in time of thunder. *Seneca* was a wise man, yet he directs to poor shifts, in such extremities; *The remedies* (saith he) *against Thunder and the Batteries of the heavens, are underground houses, caves or holes of the earth, to hide our selves in.* These were the best helps he could advise his *Roman* Gallants to, when God uttered his mighty voice in Thunder. But Christians know better how to hide themselves, even in the goodness of God, against those terrible appearances of his Power.

Thirdly, If God speak with such a Voice as this in the Air, take heed of slighting his Voice whensoever he speaks in the Church, as Atheists and Epicures do. He who speaks so loud in Thunder can thunder upon us at any time. The Word preached, if not obeyed, will at last come upon all those who obey it not, with as great a terror as Thunder.

Fourthly, Let us not be amazed and frighted at Thunder as Heathens or Unbelievers.

Fifthly, Let us not think lightly of it, as if it either came by chance, or meerly from natural causes.

Sixthly, Let us fear the God of Thunder, not fear Thunder as a God.

Lithuani fulmen deum esse putabant, & propterea illud adorabant. Cromerus, l. 15. Hist. Pol.

Some have superstitiously thought Thunder was a God, and adored it: so 'tis reported of the *Lithuanians* anciently, and possibly some of them do so to this day.

Secondly, In that *Elihu* calls so earnestly for attention to this voice, *Hear attentively the noise of his Voice*,

Learn;

Those things which are most easie to be heard, possibly may not at all be understood.

Who doth not hear when it thunders? but how few are there who attend or understand the Thunder, or hear Thunder attentively?

tively? God ſpeaks to us, not only with a ſtill voice, few hearing or attending him, but though he thunders few attend him; yea, thoſe works of providence which ſpeak lowder than Thunder, and ſhine clearer than the Lightning, yet are neither heard nor ſeen. As *When his hand is lifted up ſome will not ſee* (*Iſa.* 26. 11.) So when his Voice is lifted up, when 'tis lifted up, not only like a trumpet, but like thunder, when he ſpeaks moſt audibly, yea moſt terribly, ſome will not hear; and he is not heard by many, much leſs diligently attended to, how loudly, how terribly ſoever he ſpeaketh. The Lord often thunders by the voice of his Word; what are his terrible threats but loud thunder-claps? yet few hear, or though they hear, yet they attend not. Not to hear the voice of God in his Word, is as if you did not attend to the voice of Thunder. Every word of God, though ſpoken with a ſtill voice, hath a greater force in it than Thunder from the Clouds. As the terrible works of God are ſignified by Thunder (*Rev.* 10. 3, 4.) So the terrible words of God, his threatning words againſt impenitent ſinners, are reſembled to Thunder. And therefore ſuch as the Lord fitted among his own Apoſtles for that diſpenſation, are called in Scripture *Sons of Thunder* (*Mark* 3. 17.) And they who diſpence the Word with a ſtrong voice and fiery zeal, are truly ſo called to this day, and may be ſaid both *to Thunder in their Exhortation, and to Lighten in their Converſation.* And indeed the Word of God truly and faithfully diſpenſed by any is like Thunder. For,

Firſt, As Thunder, ſo the Word ſpoken is the Voice of God, and a more excellent and diſtinct Voice than Thunder; that only ſhewing in general that God is, or that he is great and powerful; this ſhewing us diſtinctly, who and what God is, and what he requireth of us.

Secondly, Thunder throwes down and diſſipates high things; So doth the Word of God (*2 Cor.* 10. 5.)

Thirdly, Thunder is irreſiſtable by any power of man, it will make its way through all oppoſition; ſo is and doth the Word of God.

Fourthly, Thunder pierceth very ſubtilly, it reacheth the bones quite through the fleſh; the Word of God doth more, it *divideth ſoul and ſpirit, and the joynts and marrow, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart* (Heb. 4. 12.)

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Thunder breaketh the hardeſt things which reſiſt it, but not ſoft things; ſo the Word of God breaks the ſtout, but binds up the contrite ſpirit; it *reſiſts the proud, but giveth grace to the humble* (Jam. 4. 6.)

Now if the Word of God be in all theſe reſpects like Thunder, Let us not only hear, but attend, or as the text ſaith, *hear attentively the ſound of his voice.*

If any ask, when do we both hear and attend with the inward and outward ear, the Thunder of God, or his voice both in his works and in his word? I anſwer,

Firſt, When we are ſtirred up to high and holy thoughts of God. We are never rightly affected with the Word of God, till our hearts are wrought up to, and deeply, at leaſt truly, affected with the God of the Word.

Secondly, When our hearts are raiſed up in thankfulneſs for any diſcoveries of God in his goodneſs and mercy to us, who can ſo eaſily deſtroy us by his power. He that trembles at this voice of God, and hath no ſenſe nor taſt of his goodneſs, nor is moved to praiſe and ſerve him, trembles only like a bruit beaſt.

Thirdly, When we learn to depend and hang upon him for all, as he that can do all things graciouſly for us, as well as ſpeak ſo terribly to us; then *we hear diligently the noiſe of his voice, and the ſound that goeth out of his mouth.*

For the cloſe of this matter I ſhall only adde; That though we ought to be affected with the voice of God in his Word, as with his voice in Thunder, yet let us not ſtay in that, which notes chiefly, if not only, that dread of God which the word leaves upon our ſpirits; but let us look after and labour for that effect of the Word, which like the beames and light of the Sun, may warme our hearts with joy, and leave ſtrongeſt impreſſions of the kindneſs and favour of God upon them. Mr. *Forbes*, opening that Scripture (*Rev.* 14. 2.) where Sr. *John* ſaith, *He heard a voice from heaven*, and that of three ſorts.

Firſt, *He heard a voice, as the voice of many Waters.*

Secondly, As the *voice of a great Thunder.*

Thirdly, He heard *the voice of harpers harping with their harps.* Upon conſideration of this threefold voice, which St. *John* heard, the fore-named worthy Author, takes up a meditation to this purpoſe. The word of God (ſaith he) hath three degrees of operation in the hearts of men.

Firſt,

Firſt, It comes into mens eares, *as the ſound of many waters*, which is a kind of confuſed noiſe, and commonly bringeth neither terror nor joy, but a wondering acknowledgment of a ſtrange force, and more than humane power; as we read of thoſe (*Mark.* 1.) who having heard the word of Chriſt *were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine* (v. 22.) and were all amazed (v. 27.) *inſomuch that they queſtioned among themſelves, what thing is this? what new doctrine is this?* But knew not what to make of it.

The ſecond degree is, that the Word of God cometh to the ear of man like Thunder, which cauſeth not only wonder, but greater aſtoniſhment and amazement. Both theſe may be in a wicked prophane perſon, and are often found upon common profeſſors.

But there is a third degree or effect of the Words operation, which (ſtrictly taken) is proper and peculiar to the Elect, and that is, when the Word heard is *as the voice of harpers harping with their harpes*; that is, when the Word doth not only affect us with admiration, or ſtrike the heart with aſtoniſhment and terrour, like the *ſound of many waters*, and *the voice of Thunder*; but alſo filleth it with ſweet peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, when the Word is like melodious muſick to the ſoul, raviſhing us with divine delights, and raiſing us up to a heavenly life, while we are here ſojourning on this earth.

JOB, Chap. 37. Verſ. 3, 4, 5.

3. He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his Lightning unto the ends of the earth.

4. After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency, and he will not ſtay them when his voice is heard.

5. God thundereth marvelouſly with his voice: great things doth he, which we cannot comprehend.

Elihu having ſhewed in the two former verſes, how much himſelf was affected with what God then did, or with what himſelf was about to ſay concerning the doings of God; having alſo called upon others for due attention, and laboured to make the ſame impreſſion upon their ſpirits that he found upon his own; he proceeds to ſpeak to the ſpecial matter.

Firſt, To the workes of God in thoſe terrible fiery Meteors, Thunder, and Lightning, which he doth in the three verſes now under diſcuſſion; and then goeth on to ſpeak of other wonderful works of the wonder-working God, in the following part of this Chapter, as was before ſhewed, in laying open the whole.

Verſ. 3. *He directeth it under the whole heaven.*

This verſe holds forth the divine guidance of thoſe things which ſeem moſt remote from any guidance; *He directeth it under the whole heaven.* Here we may conſider,

Firſt, In whoſe hand this guiding power is; *He*, that is, *God directeth it.*

Secondly, how far he guideth, or the extent of his guiding power; 'tis not limited, but univerſal, far and near, even *under the heaven, and to the ends of the earth.*

There is ſome variety, as of reading, ſo of interpretation, about this verſe, ariſing from the various ſignifications of that word which we render *directeth*; there is a threefold ſence given of it.

Firſt, As taken from a root which ſignifieth to *preſs or ſqueeze*, and ſo 'tis applyed to the preſſing of grapes, which cauſeth the juice or liquor

Aliqui a Rabbinica שרה *quod eſt reſol-*

liqour of them to flow out: And upon that conſideration the ſeventh month of the year, our *September*, hath its name among the Jews from this word; becauſe then the Vintage being ready, the ripe Grapes are gathered and preſt into Wine. From this notion of the word, ſome render the text thus, *he preſſeth or diſſolveth it under the whole heaven*; that is, God preſſeth the Cloud as a bunch of Grapes is preſſed (theſe Interpreters make that the antecedent to *it*, *he preſſeth it*, that is, the Cloud) and ſo cauſeth it to rain. 'Tis God who preſſeth and (as I may ſay) ſqueezeth the Clouds by his power, and then ſhowers fall down and diſtil upon the earth *under the whole Heaven*. That's a truth, and ſome-where elſe ſpoken of in this book, where we read of Gods melting or preſſing the Clouds as we do a bunch of Grapes or a ſpung, ſo cauſing them to give forth rain.

vere, humectare, exprimere. Hinc & September ab illis תשר *Tiſhri dictus, quaſi expreſſorius, quod eo menſe fiat Vindemia.* Merc.

Secondly, Others derive the word from a root that ſignifieth to *behold attentively*, to behold and conſider: Thus the latine tranſlator renders it, *he conſidereth under the whole heaven*; that is (according to this interpretation) there is a Providence of God, a wiſe and an unerring Providence of God at work in all places, he conſiders and takes notice of all things under heaven, the leaſt motion of the Creature falls under his inſpection, *He beholdeth, or conſidereth under the whole heavens*; that's a truth alſo; yet, I conceive (with others) the Grammar of the Text will not well comply with this reading: Therefore

Alii a שור *intueri reſpicere, conſiderare, quaſi Deus omnia ſub cœlo conſideret. Sed nec Grammatica convenit (tum enim* שורהו *dicendum fuerat) nec ſenſus admodum, propter affixum* Merc.

Thirdly, I conclude our own tranſlation moſt ſuitable both to the Original text, and to the ſcope of this whole Chapter. Now, according to our rendring, the word comes from a root which ſignifieth *to ſet a thing right* or ſtrait, and from that a perſon who is right, a man of a right ſpirit, who ſquares and orders his actions by a right rule, and to a right end, is expreſſed (*Chap.* 1. 1.) where *Jobs* character is given by this word, *A man perfect and right*, we ſay, upright, that is, a man that hath right aimes, and walkes by a right rule. *Moſes* (*Deut.* 32. 15.) calls the people of God (collectively as one man) *Jeſhurun*, that is, a people that are or ſhould be right and upright with God. Thus here, *he directeth it*, that is, God doth, as it were, by a ſtrait line, level or take his aim, when he diſchargeth the Thunder in the Cloud: As he that diſchargeth his gun, ſmall or great, or ſhoots an arrow, levels and directs it at a mark, ſo *the Lord directeth it*. What is this *it*? 'Tis plain

Subter omnes cœlos ipſe conſiderat. Vulg.

ישרהו *a radice* ישר *quod eſt dirigire, rectificare.*

plain, by what followeth in the latter part of the verſe, where the Lightning is expreſly mentioned, that he meanes the Thunder or the Thunder-bolt, for the Clouds are, in that caſe, charged with bolts: we have had many dreadful inſtances, as well in ancient Hiſtories, as in our own time, of Thunder-bolts like Bullets ſhot from the Clouds. As if *Elihu* had ſaid, whither-ſoever the Thunder-bolt goeth, to what quarter of the world ſoever 'tis deſigned, it receives commiſſion and direction from God, what to do, and where to fall, whom it ſhall ſmite, or what mark it ſhall hit; *He directeth it under the whole heaven*,

And his Lightning to the ends of the earth.

Naturaliſts define or deſcribe Lightning thus; *'Tis a bright ſhining, cauſed by exhalations fired in and violently breaking out of the Clouds.* The Hebrew is, *his light*. The Sun is the fountain of Light, and that is eminently Gods Light; but the Light here ſpoken of, is not the ordinary Light ſhining in the Air, by the riſing of the Sun; this Light is Lightning, which is a ſudden flaſhing or breaking forth of light from the Clouds; as when a gun is fired or diſcharged, a light flaſheth from it; ſuch is that which Authors of all ſorts call *Lightning*, and here the Scripture calls *his Lightning*. At the 3d Verſe the Thunder was called *his Voice*, the Voice of God; and in this, the Lightning is called *his Lightning*; *Elihu* appropriates it unto God himſelf, *his Lightning*. This Lightning hath more than light in it, it hath heat and fire in it; though we do not alwayes feel it, yet many have, the effects of heat and fire appearing ſadly upon them. And this is ſuch a fire as water cannot quench; and therefore we often read in Scripture, of Lightning joyned with the Rain (*Pſal.* 135. 7. *Jer.* 10. 13. *Jer.* 51. 16.) which may be remark't as one of the wonders of it. There is a ſecond, that the Lightning is ſaid to fall from heaven. When the diſciples brought a report back to Chriſt what great things they had done, what conqueſts they had got over evil ſpirits, Chriſt anſwered (*Luke* 10. 18.) *I ſaw Satan like Lightning fall from heaven*. Lightning falls from heaven; for though Lightning of its own nature (being fiery) ſhould aſcend, yet it deſcends through the power of God. Naturaliſts obſerve it as a wonder, that the Lightning ſhould deſcend: *Seneca* demonſtrates, *it could not be, unleſs there were a divine power in it, that the Lightning*

Fulgur ſeu coruſcatio eſt flammæ micatio ab exhalationibus accenſis, & è nubibus erumpentibus exorta. Ariſt. 2. Meteor. cap 9.

Ignis ſua natura in verticem ſurgit; & ſi nihil illi prohibet, aſcendet; fulmen autem cadit eadem neceſſitate, qua excutitur; nihil itaque dubii relinquitur, quin divina illi virtus inſit. Seneca.

should come down from heaven; and as *Elihu* said before, *he directeth it, or the Thunder, under the whole heaven*; so we are here to take up that word again, and say, *He directeth his Lightning*

To the ends of the earth.

כנף *A'a, proprie avium est.* πτερυγων της γης. Sept.

Here is the act, and the extention of the act, *to the ends of the earth*; the Hebrew is, *the wings of the earth*, so the word is used (*Gen.* 1. 21.) *God created great whales*, &c. *and every winged fowl.* The ends of the earth are called *the wings of the earth*, because they are the farthest out-stretchings of the earth; as a bird when she flies stretcheth out her wings to the utmost. They are also called, *The corners of the earth* (Ezek. 7. 2.) *Thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God unto the land of Israel: an end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land*; the Hebrew is, *upon the four wings* (*or ends*) *of the earth*; as if he had said, an end is come upon the East and West, North and South. These *four wings*, or extreams of the earth, are the same which Christ called the *four winds* (*Mat.* 24. 31.) where speaking of the Resurrection at the last Judgment, he shews how all that are raised shall be brought to one place or general Session, *and he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his Elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other*, that is, from the four ends, corners, skirts, or wings of the earth. The utmost extreamity of a garment or of a land, according to the Hebrew, is called, the wing of it. Now forasmuch as *Elihu* represents God, thus directing both the Thunder and Lightning,

Observe first;

All the motions of the Creature, even the most violent, and, to appearance, contingent motions of the Creature, are under the direction, yea, under the dominion of God.

Thunder and Lightning go the way which God appointeth and chalketh out to them; they move not of themselves, they move not whither men or devils would have them, but whither God would have them. The Devils, I grant, have great power in the Air, yet 'tis limited by, and wholly subordinate to the will and power of God. As the reasonable creatures and their motions, that is, the motions of Men and Angels, are under the direction of God, as *Jeremiah* speaks (*Chap.* 10. 23.) *It is not in him that goeth*

goeth to direct his own steps. The Hebrew useth a word there which may be rendred to prepare, to establish, or to confirm, neither of which are in him that goeth; we render it according to the present text, *it is not in him that goeth to direct his own steps*; who directs them then? It is God that directs the steps of man. It is not in the power of man to direct his own steps, he is not able to do it; and besides that, he hath not the liberty or priviledge to do it, he may not do it, he ought not to do it; 'tis the duty as well as the safety of man to leave the direction of his wayes and steps to God. 'Tis God that directs the steps of man, yea, the *indirect steps of man are under the mighty power of God*; the very wandrings of men are under the guidance of God; the motions, yea commotions, the actions, and the most disturbed actions of man are under a most certain disposure and disposition of God: *When men do they know not what, God knows and orders what they do.* Now (I say) as God directs reasonable creatures, men or angels, so unreasonable creatures in their motions; the motions of the beasts of the earth, and the motions of the birds of the air, are all directed by God; yea, the motions of the very inanimate creatures, of those that have no motion in or of themselves, but whose motion is by some outward violence and pressure put upon them, even their motion also is directed by the hand of God. Thunder and Lightning are inanimate liveless creatures, they have no motion of their own, but by impression and violence, yet God directs their motion as truly, as he doth the motions of those creatures which move by the most deliberate actings of their own will, reason, and understanding. What is there so violent in its motion as Thunder? What is there so swift in its motion as the Lightning? of which Christ being about to give his people warning, not to believe those deceivers, who say, *Lo here is Christ*, &c. saith (Mat. 24. 27.) *For as the Lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be*; that is, as the Lightning instantly passeth from one part of the heaven to the other visibly, so shall the coming of the Son of man be, a sudden, swift, and visible coming; Ye shall not need to go into corners to shew or see him, for he shal come as the Lightning discovering himself to all by the brightness of his coming. There was such an apprehension of the swiftness of the Lightning among the Ancients, that though the Latine word signifying *to Lighten*, is accented long,

Christum non venit clam aut invisibiliter ut illi volunt, qui jactant se habere christum in deserto, in urbe, in claustro, in conditorio, sed palam, ut fulmen editum per omnia lucet. Coc.

long, yet becauſe Lightning is ſo ſwift in motion they were wont to pronounce it ſhort; Lightning being ſo quick and active, they thought it was not ſuitable to draw it out in ſpeaking by a long pronunciation. But though Lightning have ſuch a violent and ſwift motion, yet 'tis under Gods command and direction, and it ſhall make no more haſte than God will. An arrow flies with a very violent and ſwift motion, yet it is God that directeth the arrow, he directs it more than the man that ſhoots it; and when a ſhot is made, as we ſay, at random, God then directs it; as in that notable hiſtory of *Ahab*, when he, againſt the counſel of God given him by *Micaiah*, would needs go up to the battel at *Ramoth Gilead* (1 *Kings* 22. 34.) the text ſaith, *There was a man who drew a bow at a venture*, we put in the Margin, *He drew a bow in his ſimplicity*, he had no ſpecial intention againſt *Ahab*, he did not aim at *Ahab* when he ſhot his arrow, but God carried it to the right mark, to fulfil that which he had determined and ſpoken concerning *Ahab*; yea, he directed it not only to the right man, but to the right place, the joynt of his armour. When in battel, arrows, and darts, and bullets are ſent forth, as ſo many thunder-bolts, the Lord directs them and hands them whither they ſhall go, whom they ſhall hit, and where. God alſo directeth the thunder-bolts of his Word, where and whom they ſhall hit. And (to the point in general) that the Lord hath a guidance over thoſe things that are moſt contingent, we may ſee in that of *Moſes*, when he gave a Law from the Lord about the man that goeth with his Neighbour to cut Wood; *If* (ſaith he) *the head ſlippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour that he die, he ſhall flee into one of thoſe cities and live.* (Deut. 19. 5.) The reaſon of this Law is expreſſed (*Exod.* 21. 13.) becauſe in ſuch contingent caſes *God delivers him into his hand*; the man had no intent to hit his Neighbour, but fetching a blow, the head flieth from the helve, and both hits and kills him; and to ſhew that this contingency was ordered by God, the text ſaith, *God delivered him into his hand.*

Ad ſignificandum hanc è imbibus ſubitæ lucis eruptionem non ſtatim ſed antequam media ſyllaba correpta ut crebrent fulgura. Sen. lib. 2. Nat quæſt. cap. 56.

Providentia non eſt incerta eat vagi.

And foraſmuch as God hath ſuch a power over the motions of the creature, it may be matter of comfort and incouragement to us, not only with reſpect to Thunder and Lightning, that we ſhould not fear them, as the heathen, who neither know nor fear God; but we may take comfort from hence alſo, with reſpect to the moſt violent and hurried motions that we ſee here below. When we

we find men acting like Thunder and Lightning, without deliberation, when they are all in paſſions and perturbations, yet let us know, theſe violent motions ſhall not fall any where by chance or hap hazard, nor by their own way, but as God appoynts and overrules them; they ſhall either fall quite beſides the marke which men aimed at, and ſo do no hurt to any, or if they do, God orders what hurt they ſhall do. *He directeth it under the whole heaven.* Let us carry this conſideration alwayes with us, and it will be a great ſtay to our minds in all the violent motions of the creature.

Again, from the extent of this divine direction or providence of God, as to theſe things; *He directeth it under the whole heaven, and unto the ends of the earth*, that is, every where;

Note;

The providence of God reacheth to all places.

His orders go forth into all lands, his dominion is under the whole heavens and unto the ends of the earth (*Pſalm.* 65. 5.) *He is the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the Sea.* God is not helpful to his people in one place of the earth, and not in another, or helpful to them upon the earth, and not upon the Sea, but to the ends of the earth, and upon the broad ſea *he is their confidence*, that is, they may confide and truſt in him whereſoever they are. Hence that expoſtulation in the prophet (*Jeremiah* 23. 23.) *Am I* (ſaith the Lord) *a God at hand, and not a God afar off?* Some would circumſcribe and limit the Power of God, as if being a God neer at hand he could not be a God afar off too, or to thoſe who are ſcattered to the ends of the earth. But while he puts the queſtion, *am I a God at hand and not afar off?* he puts it out of queſtion, that *he is a God afar off as well as at hand.* The *Syrians* ſaid & pleaſed themſelves in their conceit (1 *Kings* 20. 28.) The Lord is God *of the hills, but he is not God of the vallies*; therefore they would change the battel, as if he could order things here and not there; but all ſhall find & feel him (as they did) a God both of the hills & of the vallies, a God both of the Land and of the Sea, a God both at hand, and afar off. It is ſaid of the Empire of the Sun (*Pſal.* 19 6.) *his going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof*: much more may I ſay of the Empire of God, his going forth is from one end of the earth to the other,

and

and there is nothing hid from his wisdom and government. One of the Ancients gives his sentence clearly with this truth; *He* (saith he) *that ruleth in the highest heavens doth not forsake the ends of the earth, he is every where present, and every where alike present; though the places are unlike, yet the presence of the Lord is a like when need requires it.* That's further matter of comfort, that under the whole heaven and unto the ends of the earth we may find the Lord ready for us, and disposing all things, not only for good, but for the best. *He directeth it* &c.

Qui summa regit extrema non deserit, & qui utique præsens & equalis est, etiam in dissimilibus, sit i ipsi dissimilis non est. Gregor.

Vers. 4. *After it a voice roareth*, or, *after it he roareth with a voice.*

קול
בקול
pro
Elli: sit præpositionis ב
Post eum. Vulg.
Pro voluntate ac jubente illo: ut post deum sit post ille præceperit. Brus.
Antambulones & prænuncii supremi regis advenantis.

There is another reading of these words, some give it thus; *after him a voice roareth*, That is, after his command; God willing and giving forth an order for it, *a voice roareth*, that is, at his command or word the voice roareth, or followeth. As if the scope of *Elihu* in this Text, were to shew, that neither Thunder nor Lightning stir a foot or haires breadth, till they have a word from God, as indeed they do not. For, though Thunder and Lightning may be called Gods *Ushers or Heralds* that go before him & proclame his approach (*Psal.* 18. 12, 13, 14.) yet they follow and come after him; They go before him as to action, yet they come after him as to commission, they go not till he saith go, or hath given them commission to go. That's a profitable reading of the words.

Our translation saith, *after it a voice roareth*, that is, after the Lightning, or as soon as it hath Lightned a voice roareth. Our experience teacheth us that Thunder followeth the Lightning; which we are not to understand according to the nature of the thing, for so Thunder and Lightning are, as it were, born and brought forth together; there is no difference between them at all in time, but there is a difference as to order, at least as to order in our apprehension; and so the one may be said to come after the other, the Thunder after the Lightning; as when a gun, lesser or greater, is discharged, if you are at a distance you may see the fire a considerable time before you hear the report, and possibly the bullet hits the mark before the sound hits to the ear, though the discharge be made in a moment; which some say is because the eye is a quicker sence than the ear, but rather, because light doth in a moment strike through the air, but the sound comes by certain circuits, & fetcheth a longer compass before it comes at the ear, as hath been

Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus. Horat.

been toucht lately before, as also at the 26 verse of the 28 chapter. And besides this, or any other reason of the thing in nature, constant experience teacheth us that we see the light first and then hear the voice; and therefore *Elihu* speakes here very congruously to both, *After it a voice roareth.* And as the reason of this in nature (as was shewed) is that more speedy passage of the light through the air than of the sound, so a moral reason may be given of it, which take in this observation.

God mindes or warnes us of his Judgments before he sends them.

Fulguratio ostendit ignem fulminatio emittit, illa (ut ita dicam) comminatio est, & conatio sine ictu, ista jaculatio cum ictu. Sen. lib. 2. Nat. Quest. cap. 12.

When you see Lightning you say there will be Thunder by and by; as natural Lightning gives warning of Thunder, so God gives warning from his word, and providences, when a Thunder-clap of judgment, in any kind, is coming. God never sends a judgment, but we hear of it before we feel it; God speaks before he strikes (*Matth.* 24.) *Behold, I have told you before.* Lightning tells us Thunder is at hand. God doth not use to strike his people with a Thunder-bolt, before he hath given them notice by a flash of Lightning; indeed judgments alwayes surprize the wicked; how much Lightning soever hath been dashed in their eyes, yet the Thunder comes unawares. The day of the Lord will at least come as a snare upon all carnal men, though they have had frequent calls to prepare for it. God in the course of nature teacheth us the course of his providence, Lightning gives warning that Thunder is coming, and happy are they who take warning by his Lightning, and so escape the stroke of his Thunder; *after it a voice Roareth.*

רגיעת שאגת אריה.
rugivit proprium leonis.

It hath been already shewed that Thunder is the voice of God; here *Elihu* tells us what kind of voice it is, *it roareth.* The word signifieth the roaring of a lion, 'tis also applyed to the roaring of the Sea, that's a dreadful roaring. Naturalists tell us there are several sorts of Thunder; every Thunder is not a roaring Thunder, they give five or six gradual denominations of Thunder;

First, There is a *shrecking or crashing* Thunder. 1. *Stridens.*

Secondly, There is a *hissing* Thunder, as when red hot iron is put into water. 2. *Sibilans.*

Thirdly, There is a *cracking Thunder*, as when a bladder is broken, or a chesnut in the fire. 3. *Crepans.*

Fourthly,

4 *Tumultuans.*

5 *Rugiens.*&c. Garcæus Meteorolog.

Fourthly, There is *a rumbling* Thunder. We sometimes hear only a rushing in the clouds, no crack of Thunder breaking our. Fifthly, There is *a roaring* Thunder, as this text speakes, *a voice roareth.*

Sixthly, There is *a whispering* Thunder, I may call it a kind of silent or still-voyced Thunder; possibly that was such spoken of (1 *Kings* 19. 12.) *After the fire, a still small voice.* As also that when Jesus Christ was baptized by *John* in *Jordan* (*Matth.* 3. 17.) *And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*; 'Tis conceived, that voice came in a still whispering Thunder. Such doubtless was that Thunder (*John* 12. 28, 29.) when Christ prayed, *Father, glorifie thy Name; then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorifie it again.* At the hearing of this voice, *the people that stood by, said that it thundred, others said, that an Angel spake to him.* This voice was an articulate sound coming with the Thunder; and the Hebrew word which we commonly translate *voyces*, signifieth thunder. The Jewish Writers tell us that (*Bath col*) *the daughter of voice* (which they reckon the only way of divine revelation, left them after the *Babylonish* Captivity) was the will of God made known to them immediately from heaven by this sort of Thunder. *Thunders and voyces* are often joyned in the Book of the *Revelations* (*Chap.* 4. 5. *chap.* 8. 5.) implying, the revelation of those prophetick wonders, was made by Voyces accompanied with Thunder. And thus those two texts which seem contradictory may be reconciled, *Act.* 9. 7. it is said, *They who journied with Paul, stood speechless hearing a voice.* But (*Act.* 22. 9.) *Paul* saith, *They saw indeed the light and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.* The voice which they heard in the 9th Chapter was the voice of Thunder, and the voice which they did not hear the 22d, was the distinct articulate voice of Christ, saying, *Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou me?*

From this consideration of Gods gradual speaking to us in the Clouds, we may be led to consider how gradually he speaks to us in the Ministry of his Word; there he speaks sometimes whisperingly, gently, he at first awakens the ear a little, but at last *he roareth with his voice.* If we will not hear, he hath louder and louder voices, which we shall hear whether we will or no. At the giving of the Law (*Exod.* 19. 19.) *The voice of the trumpet* sounded

sounded long, and waxed louder and louder. There are different degrees in the loudness of the voice when God speaks to his people. We should take warning by the light that shineth, we should hear the smallest voice, the first whisperings of God, and not put him to his roaring voice. God is said *to roar out of Zion* (*Joel* 3. 16.) yea, many times he roareth upon *Zion*, because of the disobedience and negligence of the Citizens of *Zion. After it a voice roareth*, the words that follow speak the same thing,

He thundereth with the voice of his excellency.

This is the first time that we have the word *Thunder* expresst in the text, though the sense of the whole place speakes thunder. The word which signifieth Thunder, signifieth any great noise or dreadful cry (*Ezek.* 27. 35.) (*Psal.* 96. 11.) it signifieth also the voice of any one that complaineth or bemoaneth his or her condition, or that is troubled or fretted at the crosness of relations: It is said of *Peninnah*, *she provoked her* (that is, *Hannah*) *sore* (or, as the Margin reads it, *angred her*) *for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb*: The word is that of the text, *to make her thunder*, or to cause a tumultuation in her spirit, like that in the Clouds, when heat and cold contend for the masteryes.

רעם *Tonuit, intonuit, commotus fuit præ indignatione.* *Tonitru est fragor editus ex plaga compactorum ignium e nube erumpentium.* Plin.

Tonitru est horrendus sonus in nube spissa, qui excitatur ab exhalatione calida & sicca, conclusa intra nubem, quæ cum fremitu quærens exitum, magna violentia erumpit & undique nubem concutit. Garcæ. Meteorolog. ex Aristot. lib. 2. Meteor. c. 9.

Thunder is so unquiet and tumultuous, that any thing which is so, may by a figure be called Thunder. The text speaks of proper Thunder; and if we enquire among Philosophers about the nature and genetation of Thunder, some tell us briefly, *Thunder is a crashing or cracking noise made by the stroke of enclosed fires breaking through the Clouds.* Or thus, *Thunder is a dreadful sound in a thick Cloud, caused by the hot and dry exhalation shut up in the bowels of it, which seeking passage out makes its own way with mighty violence.*

But though the matter here treated upon by *Elihu* be philosophical, yet I must remember that mine is a Divinity, not a Philosophy Lecture, and therefore it may suffice me to touch these things, and leave the Reader, who desires to know more of them, or of other mysteries in Nature, to seek his satisfaction in those learned Authors who professedly handle this subject of Thunder; and shall here only take notice that *Elihu* doth not only say, *He thundereth*, but *He thundereth*

With the voice of his excellency.

גאון *Excellentia elatio, ſupernia verbum medium eſt.*

That's an explication of *he roareth.* The voice of *his excellency,* is *his high voice.* The word ſignifieth *pride,* becauſe they that are in high places are ſo apt to be proud, or becauſe high-mindedneſs is the ſame with pride. Proud men think themſelves higher than their brethren, as *Saul* was above the people by head and ſhoulders; therefore the ſame word ſignifieth pride and light. The *Lord thundereth with the voice of his highneſs or excellency of his greatneſs.*

Ἐν τῷ ὀνειδίσει ὀνειδ. In voce contumeliæ ſuæ, Sept. *Scolia explicant in voce minarum plena.*

The Septuagint ſaith, *He thundereth with the voice of his reproach,* or *with his reproaching voice.* A man that is angry poures out his diſpleaſure in reproaches upon ſuch as have provoked him. God knowes how to Thunder juſt and deſerved reproaches upon provoking ſinners. The Scoliaſts explain that tranſlation of the ſeventy, *with the voice of his reproach,* thus, *with or by a voice full of threatning;* and 'tis a truth, the mouth of God is full of threatnings, and his heart of indignation, againſt preſuming ſinners. We may put all theſe together, yet I conceive our own reading moſt ſuitable; *He thundereth with the voice of his excellency,* like a great Commander in war, of whom God ſpeaks (*Job.* 39. 25.) in that moſt high-ſtrained, rhetorical deſcription of the ſtrength and courage of the horſe; *He ſmelleth the Battel afar off, the thunder of the Captain, and the Shoutings.* When an Army is engaged in Battel, there is not only a thundering of the Guns, but of the Captains and Commanders, they ſpeak highly, they thunder with a voice of their high courage and excellency; much more doth God in the day of his Battel *thunder with the voice of his excellency.*

Hence note;

God works like himſelf, he makes his excellency and his highneſs appear to the children of men in the very works of nature.

And doth he not often ſo it in his works of Providence, whether for the Salvation of his faithful people, or for the Deſtruction of his enemies? I ſhall not ſtay upon this point, having met with matter of the ſame purport more than once before. *He thundereth with the voice of his excellency,*

And

And he will not ſtay them when his voyce is heard.

עקב *calcaneum tenuit. Aliqui exponunt retardabuntur imperſonaliter, vel retardabit aliquis fulmen, vel fulgur cum deus emittere petit.* Scult. *Neq; differt illa cum audienda eſt vox ejus.* Jun: i. e. *fulgetra tonitruum prænuncia exhibet.* μείωσις *non differt?* i. e. *præmittit.* Jun:

'Tis queſtion'd, who are meant by *them, He will not ſtay them;* Some underſtand the raine and ſhowers, which uſually follow upon, or after a great thunder; and we commonly call them *thunder ſhowers.* Others underſtand the Lightning and the Thunder; as if he had ſaid, When Gods purpoſe is declared that there ſhall be lightning and thunder, *he will not ſtay them,* or take them by the heele, as the word properly ſignifieth: whence *Jacob* had his name, becauſe when *Eſau* was coming into the world, *Jacob* took him by the heele, as if he would have ſtayed or ſtopped his birth, at leaſt have got into the world before him; and therefore *Eſau* ſaid (*Gen.* 27. 36.) *Is he not rightly called Jacob? for he hath ſupplanted me theſe two times.* Which ſome render according to the letter of the Text, *My brother may well be called an Heeler, for he hath heeled me theſe two times.* In this ſenſe the Lord will not ſtay the birth and breaking forth of theſe terrible twins, Thunder and Lightning. Laſtly, learned *Junius* referrs *them* to the Lightnings only, rendring, *He doth not defer them, when his voyce is to be heard;* which he thus expounds, He ſends lightning before, foretelling thunder will follow. But I conceive the former expoſition more cleare, which refers this not ſtaying, *or he will not ſtay,* both to thunder and lightning, in conſort or together.

Hence note;

When once God ſpeaks the word, and is reſolved upon the doing of a thing, there is no ſtopping of him, nor will he ſtay his work.

He will not take thunder and lightning by the heele, when he hath bid them go. We have a parallel ſenſe to this, concerning the thunder and lightning of divine Judgements (*Zeph.* 2. 1, 2.) *Gather your ſelves together, O gather your ſelves together, before the decree bring forth.* As if he had ſaid, If once the decree bring forth, if once God declare that wrath ſhall come, there is no recalling of it, *He will not ſtay it when his voyce is heard;* for then (*Iſa.* 43. 13.) *The Lord will work, and none ſhall let him;* he will not ſtop it himſelf, and none elſe can. Thunder and lightning ſhall come; whoſoever ſtand in their way muſt down. And as none

can

can lett God by power, to none ſhall lett him by prayer, if once he be reſolved, and hath ſent forth his decree; therefore do not provoke the Lord to give out the word, for then your caſe is deſperate. There's no oppoſing the work of God, or God in his working. *He will not ſtay them when his voyce is heard.*

Verſ. 5. *God thundreth marveilouſly with his voyce; great things doth he that we cannot comprehend.*

Conſider how often this word is repeated, *He roareth with his voice, He thundereth with the voice of his excellency*, and here, *He thundereth marveilouſly.* This may teach us, Firſt, (which hath been noted before) that *the works of God in nature are to be heeded.* Secondly, that *we are very backward to heed them.* Thirdly, *this is ſo often aſcribed to God, leaſt we ſhould think that thunder is only a work of nature.*

God thundereth marveilouſly.

Tonat mirabilis. Hebr: *Numerus pluralis indicat ingentem admirationem & ſtuporem mortalium ad vocem tonitrui.* Pined.

The words may be read, *God thundereth marvels*; 'tis in the plural number: We render well, *God thundereth marveilouſly*; but there is a greater Emphaſis, taking it in the plural number, *God thundereth marvels.* Conſider thunder and lightning in a proper, or in a metaphorical ſenſe, there are many marvels or wonders in them. Naturaliſts obſerve many marvels in natural thunder and lightnings; theſe ſometimes melt the ſword without hurt to the ſcabbard; diſſolve the mettal, not conſuming the purſe; break the bones, and not the fleſh; theſe ſpoyl the Wine without ſtaving or breaking the cask; kill or ſtifle the child in the womb, and not the mother. God thunders marveilouſly in theſe things.

Again, how many marveilous Judgments hath God wrought by thunder! how often hath he deſtroyed the enemies of his people, and the blaſphemers of his great Name, by thunder and lightning from Heaven! *Anaſtatius* the Emperour, an Eutichian perſecutor of the Orthodox Chriſtians, was ſlaine by thunder. *The Hiſtory of the Church*, ſpeaks of a Chriſtian Legion or Brigade of Chriſtians in the Army of *Aurelius* the Emperour, who earneſtly prayed (the whole Army being in a great ſtrait) that God would appear for their help, and the defeating of the enemy; whereupon the Lord ſent raine for their reliefe, as alſo thunder and lightning, by which the enemy was diſcomfited and deſtroyed: whereupon that *Legion* was called, *The thundering Legion.* When *Julian* the Apoſtate, meerly to deſpite the prophetie of Chriſt (*Mat.* 24.) who had ſaid of the Temple at *Jeruſalem, there ſhould not be left one ſtone upon another*; *Julian*, I ſay, in deſpite of this prophetie, yea, to deſpite it, gave command for the building of the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, and upon his command there was a great quantity of materialls brought together for that purpoſe; but the Lord ſeeing the pride of this enemy, ſent a marveilous thunder, with an Earthquake, which not only amazed the workmen, but ſcattered thoſe materials, & put a ſtop to the work.

Now as there are many marvels wrought by natural thunder and lightning, ſo alſo by that which is ſpiritual. Nor will it be unuſeful for us to conſider them upon occaſion of what is ſaid of natural thunder in this Scripture.

God thundereth marveilouſly in the diſpenſation of his Word, or in his dealings with the ſouls of ſinners, to bring them home to himſelf, and to turn them from their ſins. We may (not excluding the proper ſenſe) profitably expound the whole 29th *Pſalm* in this ſpiritual ſenſe; wherein the Lord under the Allegory of a terrible thunder-tempeſt, ſeems to give a prophetical deſcription of his mighty power in propagating the Goſpel to the ends of the earth; which goeth not out as an empty ſound beating the aire, but with wonderful efficacy, convincing the world of ſin, and of their need of Chriſt to ſave them from their ſins. And to ſhew that this is the ſcope of the Pſalm, *David* begins it with a ſtrong exhortation, (*v.* 1, 2.) *Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give ye unto the Lord glory and ſtrength: Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his Name; worſhip the Lord in the beauty of holineſs.* As if *David* had ſaid, *O ye, the mighty Princes and Potentates of the world, who in moſt places and times have contemned God and his holy worſhip; and being your ſelves either irreligious, or engaged in a falſe religion, have uſed your power againſt, and hindered the progreſs of the Goſpel, and the advancement of true religion; I adviſe and admoniſh you to lay down that ſpirit, to embrace the Goſpel, to love the power of godlineſs, to propagate the true knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and to encourage the faithfull diſpencers and profeſſors of it, both by your favour and example, worſhiping the Lord in the beauty of holineſs.*

If any ſhould ask, Why is the Lord to be ſo worſhipped? why muſt

muſt he have ſuch high honours from thoſe that are high? what doth he in the World which calls for ſuch adoration? *David* anſwers Meteorologically as well as Theologically, he anſwers from the Clouds (*verſ.* 3.) *The Voyce of the Lord is upon the Waters, the God of glory thundreth; the Lord is upon many Waters; The voyce of the Lord is powerful, the voyce of the Lord is full of Majeſty.* As if he had ſaid, Although the Lord Jeſus Chriſt will not ſet up an outward, pompous, political Kingdome, ſuch as that of *Cyrus* or *Alexander*, &c. yet by the Miniſtry of the Goſpel he will erect a ſpiritual Kingdome, and gather to himſelf a Church, that ſhall abide for ever, out of all the Nations of the earth: For the Goſpel ſhall be carryed and preached to, not only the people of *Iſrael*, the *Jewes*, but to the *Gentiles* all the world over, that the minds of men may be awakened, enlightned, and moved with that unheard of Doctrine of Salvation by Chriſt, which had been hid from Ages and Generations.

And though many ſhall be hardned againſt, and oppoſe that glad-tydings, yet becauſe the *God of glory thundereth*, that is, *becauſe the voyce of the Lord is powerful and full of Majeſty*; he accompanying the Miniſtry of the Goſpel with power and terror like that of Thunder, home to the Conſciences of men, for their conviction and converſion, therefore it ſhall do great and glorious things, ſubduing the greateſt and ſtouteſt ſinners to the obedience of his Will. *This Thunder will caſt down the ſtrong holds of ſin, and every thing that exalteth it ſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt*, (2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.) This is it which the Prophet *David* inrendereth (according to this allegorical interpretation) by the effects of Thunder, elegantly expreſſed (*verſ.* 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) *The Voyce of the Lord breaketh the Cedars, yea, the Lord breaketh the Cedars of Lebanon*; that is, proud and high-minded men, who are (in their own conceit) as tall as Cedars, theſe he will make to ſee that they are but ſhrubs, theſe he will humble and break their hearts by true repentance, for the pride of their hearts, and all the abominations of their lives. Further (*verſ.* 6.) *He maketh them alſo to skip like a Calf, Lebanon and Syrion like a young Unicorn*; that is, the Lord by his thundering powerful voyce, firſt, will make them skip as frighted with fear, and ſecondly, as revived with joy. Yet more (*verſ.* 7.) *The Voyce of the Lord divideth the*

Flames of fire; that is, will ſend and divide to every one as they need (1 *Cor.* 12. 11.) the holy Spirit, who is compared to and called Fire (*Mat.* 3. 11.) and who came as with a Thunder-ſtorm *of a mighty ruſhing wind, and with the appearance of cloven Tongues, like as of fire, and ſate upon each one of the Apoſtles*, (Acts 2. 2, 3.) Nor did this Voyce of Thunder, accompanied with divided flames of fire, reach *Jeruſalem* only; for, as it follows (*verſ.* 8.) *The Voyce of the Lord ſhaketh the Wilderneſs, the Wilderneſs of Kadeſh*; that is, the Lord by the voyce of the Goſpel ſhall go forth with power to thoſe *Gentiles*, who are like a wilderneſs, barren of goodneſs, and unmanur'd in ſpirituals, though they dwell in well-govern'd Cities, and are well-furniſhed with Morals. It ſhall go forth alſo to thoſe *Gentiles* who inhabit waſt wilderneſſes, and are not ſo much as reduced to civility: Theſe wilderneſſes the thundering voice of the Lord hath ſhaken heretofore, and doth ſhake at this day, and will yet further ſhake, that the fulneſs of the *Gentiles* may come in. Many of theſe wilderneſſes hath the Lord turned into fruitful fields, and pleaſant lands, by the voice of the Goſpel ſounding among them. For in theſe wilderneſſes (as it followeth *verſ.* 9.) *The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve*; that is, they that were as wild, as untaught and untamed as the hind or any beaſt in the forreſt, he brings to the ſorrows of their new-birth, to Repentance and Goſpel-humiliation: And in doing this *He* (as the Pſalmiſt goes on) *diſcovereth the forreſts*, that is, opens the hearts of men, which are as thick ſet and full grown with vanity, pride, hypocriſie, ſelf-love, and ſelf-ſufficiency, as alſo with wantonneſs and ſenſuality, as any foreſt is over-grown with thickets of trees and buſhes, which deny all paſſage through, till cleared away by cutting down or burning up; Such an opening, ſuch a diſcovery doth the Lord make in the forreſts of mens hearts, by the Sword and Fire, that is, by the Word and Spirit of the Goſpel; and when all this is done, the forreſt becomes a Temple, and as that verſe concludes, *In his temple doth every one ſpeak of his glory.* And if the floods of ungodlineſs riſe up againſt this people, whom the thunder and lightning of the Goſpel have ſubdued to Chriſt and framed into a holy Temple, then the Pſalmiſt aſſureth us (*verſ.* 10.) *The Lord ſitteth upon the flood*, that is, 'tis under his power, he ruleth and over-ruleth it: yea, *The Lord ſitteth King for ever*, and (*v.* 11.) *The Lord will give ſtrength to his people, the Lord will*

bleſs

bless his people with peace. Thus the Lord *thundereth marvellously* and these are glorious marvels which he thundereth; he converts sinners. The thunder of the Gospel frights them out of sin, and the grace of it gives them peace.

Thus, though I like not their way who are given to allegorize the Scriptures, yet, I doubt not but we may make a profitable use both of this and many other Scriptures by way of allegory. This being an undeniable truth, which is the ground of it, That the Lord puts forth, as it were, the power of Thunder and Lightning in the preaching of his Word, these two things are to be marked.

First, That Thunder and Lightning are a kind of Word of God to us, they tell us (though confusedly, yet plainly enough, for the conviction and condemnation of gainsayers) there is a God; the greatest Princes of the world have taken notice by Thunder and Tempest that there is a God over all, governing all; nor needs there any more teaching than that to condemne Athiests and Mockers at Religion. We say proverbially of some men, who make a rude noise, they are so loud that we cannot *hear God Thunder for them*; yet know there's no noise can so drown the voice of Gods Thunder in the Clouds, but it will condemn all that hear it not, so as to acknowledg God in it.

Secondly, We should mark, that as Thunder and Lightning are a kind of Voice or Word of God to us, so the Word of God, or the Voice of God, speaking in his Word, is a kind of Thunder and Lightning to us, very mighty, very powerful, even clothed with an irresistible power and might. And therefore if we take the Prophet *David* in 29th Psalm before mentioned, speaking, in the former part of it, of the effects of Natural Thunder only; yet toward the close of the Psalm, he applyeth it to the Word of God, while he saith (v. 9.) *And in his Temple doth every one speak of his glory*; that is, the Word and Ordinances of God, ministred in his Church, or Temple, will put every one to acknowledge and speak of the glorious Power of God, even much more than the mighty Thunder which soundeth in our eares, or the subtil Lightning which flasheth in our eyes. There is a far more royal power in the Thunder of the Word, than in the word of Thunder; This terrifyeth only to Conviction, but that terrifieth to Salvation; for after God speakes terror there in his Threatnings, he speaks comfort in the Promises; and when he hath

hath affrighted us with a sense of our sins, and of his wrath due to us for our sins, as with an horrible tempest, he presently refresheth us with the gentle gales of revealed grace, and with the pleasant amiable Sun-shine of his favour by Jesus Christ. And therefore in respect both of the Natural and Spiritual Thunder, considered in the circumstances and consequences of it, *Elihu* might well conclude, as he doth, in the last words of this Verse and matter,

Great things doth he, which we cannot comprehend.

We may take these words, not only as intending the great things of the Thunder, which indeed are such as we cannot comprehend; but, as a transition from Thunder, to those other great things that God doth, set forth in the latter part of the Chapter.

Great things doth he.

God doth the least things, but he can do great things, he doth great things

Which we cannot comprehend.

The Hebrew is, *He doth great things, and we know not*; which may be expounded two wayes. *Facit magna & non cognoscimus.* Heb.

First, *We know not*, that is, we take no notice of them. God doth great things, and we are very backward to consider them.

Secondly, *We know not*, that is, he doth such great things, that let us consider and study them as long as we will, let us break our brains to find out the greatness of them, yet we shall never find it out; *He doth great things that we cannot comprehend.* The text is clear, and the sense profitable in either Interpretation; he doth great things which we do not consider, or he doth great things, that when we have considered them, and done the most we can, we cannot come to the full knowledge of them. Naturalists speak much of the causes of these things, yet the clearest sighted among them, could not see the bottom of them, nor reach the utmost reason of them. *Great things doth he, which we cannot comprehend.*

Hence note;

It is both proper and easie to God to do great things.

He is the great God, so great that doing great things is no wea-

bless his people with peace. Thus the Lord *thundereth marvellously* and these are glorious marvels which he thundereth; he converts sinners. The thunder of the Gospel frights them out of sin, and the grace of it gives them peace.

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The Hebrew is, *He doth great things, and we know not*; which may be expounded two wayes. *Facit magna & non cognoscimus.* Heb.

First, *We know not*, that is, we take no notice of them. God doth great things, and we are very backward to consider them.

Secondly, *We know not*, that is, he doth such great things, that let us consider and study them as long as we will, let us break our brains to find out the greatness of them, yet we shall never find it out; *He doth great things that we cannot comprehend.* The text is clear, and the sense profitable in either Interpretation; he doth great things which we do not consider, or he doth great things, that when we have considered them, and done the most we can, we cannot come to the full knowledge of them. Naturalists speak much of the causes of these things, yet the clearest sighted among them, could not see the bottom of them, nor reach the utmost reason of them. *Great things doth he, which we cannot comprehend.*

Hence note;

It is both proper and easie to God to do great things.

He is the great God, so great that doing great things is no wea-

meets to him. The text doth not ſay, *he hath done great things*, or *he will do great things*, but, *he doth great things*, he is alwayes doing great things; and this is a point improveable for the comfort of the people of God. When a great matter is to be done, we ſay, who ſhall do it? when we are in great troubles and dangers, we ſay, who ſhall deliver us? If ſmall matters be to be done, we think we or other men like our ſelves can do them; but when great matters are to be done, we hardly believe, that God can do them for us; yet 'tis all one with God whether the thing be great or little that is to be done, if he pleaſe to undertake the doing of it. It is queſtioned (*Amos* 7. 2.) *By whom ſhall Jacob ariſe, for he is ſmall?* They looked to this and that creature, and ſaw *Jacob* ſo ſmall and low, that they thought he could never riſe again; but remember *Jacobs God is great, and he doth great things*, this great thing eſpecially, to raiſe them that are low and ſmall. What-ever your condition is, remember God is great, and can as well do great things as little, as eaſily make a world as give you a morſel of bread; there is nothing hard to God; *He doth great things*, and (according to the fulneſs of the Hebrew text) *we know not*, that is, we conſider them not, we take little notice of them.

Hence obſerve;

The ſons of men are commonly very ſlight thoughted about the great works of God.

When God thunders marvels, we know them not, we lay them not to heart. The Prophet (*Iſa.* 5. 12.) ſheweth how buſie the careleſs Jews were in their mirth and jollity, *but they regarded not the work of the Lord, neither conſidered the operation of his hands.* When God is doing great things, one man is getting wealth, another taking his pleaſure, but they regard not at all, or have very little regard to what God is doing.

Again, from our reading, *Great things doth he, which we cannot comprehend*,

Note;

God doth great things that are beyond the greateſt of our apprehenſions, ſuch things, as after all our ſtudy we are ſhort in, and ſhort of.

As it is our ſin that we take not paines enough to know the great things

things that God doth; ſo God doth things ſo great, that when we have done our beſt, or, after all our paines, we cannot know them fully: though we know their outſide, yet little of their inſide, though we know their effects, yet little of their cauſes and contrivances. *To know a thing, is to know it in the cauſes of it*, to ſee the reaſon of it. A man knoweth not the things that he knows, till he ſeeth the reaſon of what he knows. How little doth man know of, or ſee into the reaſon of the great things that God doth? How little do we ſee of the marvels that are in the works of God? *The love of God paſſeth knowledge* (*Epheſ.* 3. 19.) Though we labour to know it (and 'tis our ſin that we labour not more to know it) yet we cannot, it ſurpaſſeth all our knowledge. And as that love of God, which is the firſt mover of all the good and great things that he doth for his people, paſſeth our knowledge, ſo the things that are the effects of that love to his people are ſo great, that they paſs our knowledge. Hence we may infer theſe two duties. *Scire eſt per cauſas ſcire.*

Firſt, Let us be much in the admiration of the great things that God doth. Where knowledge ends, there admiration ſhould begin. It was a ſhame for a Philoſopher to admire, becauſe he was ſuppoſed to know the whole compaſs of nature; but 'tis no ſhame for a Chriſtian to admire, there being many things, not only in the ſpecial diſpenſations of grace, but in the common diſpenſations of providence, which he cannot know comprehenſively, the whole compaſs of which he cannot graſpe or take in with the beſt of his underſtanding.

Secondly, *Let us take heed of cenſuring the works of God.* Some are very bold in paſſing their Verdicts upon the great things that God doth; this, and that is not ſo well done, this and that might have been otherwiſe done. The great things which God doth pleaſe not many men if they hit not their intereſt, how apt are they to find fault; But ſeeing God doth great things that we cannot comprehend, let us take heed of cenſuring any of the great things that God doth; no man ſhould judge or cenſure that which he doth not, cannot know, and fully underſtand: But uſually *they who underſtand things leaſt, cenſure them moſt, and they are moſt apt to judge, who have the weakeſt judgements.*

JOB, Chap. 37. Verſ. 6, 7, 8.

6. For he ſaith to the ſnow, be thou on the earth: likewiſe to the ſmall rain, and to the great rain of his ſtrength.

7. He ſealeth up the hand of every man, that all men may know his work.

8. Then the beaſts go into dens, and remain in their places.

Elihu having ſet forth the wonders of divine power in Thunder and Lightning, gives us other inſtances, to the ſame purpoſe, in this context.

Firſt, In the Snow.

Secondly, in the Rain. And he deſcribes the Snow and Rain three wayes.

Firſt, By poynting at their Author or producer, in the 6th verſe [*He*] that is, God, of whom he ſpake in the cloſe of the former verſe.

Secondly, He ſheweth the way or manner of their production [*he ſaith*] 'tis done by a word, or command, that is, by a word of command; *he ſaith to the Snow, be likewiſe ſaith to the ſmall Rain, and to the great Rain of his ſtrength, be ye on the earth.*

Thirdly, He diſcribes the effects, or conſequences, at leaſt, of Snow and Rain; and thoſe are of two ſorts.

Firſt, What reſpects man, at the 7th verſe, *He ſealeth up the hand of every man, that all men may know his work.* Th re we have the firſt effect, the ſealing of mans hand, together with the deſigne or intent of God in it, *that all men may know his work.*

The ſecond effect reſpects the beaſts of the earth, at the 8th verſe; *then*, that is, when God hath commanded the Snow and the Rain to *be on the earth, then the beaſts go into dens and remain in their places.* Thus we may conceive the parts and general ſcope of theſe three verſes.

Verſ.

Verſ. 6. *For, he ſaith to the Snow.*

That cauſal particle [*for*] in the front of this verſe, imports a reaſon, or an account given in theſe words, of what was ſaid before at the 5th verſe, *God doth great things which we cannot comprehend*; then preſently followeth, *for he ſaith to the Snow*, &c. As if *Elihu* had ſaid, not only are Thunder and Lightning, but Snow and Rain to be numbred and reckoned among the great and marveilous works of God; *for he ſaith to the Snow.*

He ſaith;

That is, as hath been ſhewed already, he commandeth. What God ſaith, ſhall be, muſt be, his words are laws, *he ſaith to, or commandeth the Snow.* Not only doth God give commands to rational creatures, men & Angels, but to meer ſenſitive creatures, the beaſts and to ſenſeleſs creatures, to vegetives or plants, yea, to inanimates, to things without any life at all, ſuch are Snow and Rain; yet, as if Snow and Rain had an ear to hear, & an underſtanding to mind a command from God, the text repreſents God ſpeaking to theſe,

He ſaith to the Snow, &c.

The Snow falls in ſilver ſhowres every year, and covers the face of the earth; All men behold it, but few underſtand either what it is, or why it is ſent. Take this briefe deſcription of it from the Schoole of Nature.

Snow is a moiſt vapour, drawn up from the earth, to, or neer, the middle region of the Air, where it is condenſed or thickned into a Cloud, and falls down again like carded wool, ſometimes in greater, ſometimes in leſſer flakes.

Snow and Rain, are made of the ſame matter, and have their breeding in the ſame place, only they differ in their outward form, as is obvious to the eye, and their ſeaſon; Rain falleth in the warmer ſeaſons, the Clouds being diſſolved into Rain by heat, or when the cold is more remiſs; Snow falleth in the ſharper ſeaſons, the Cloud being thickned by the cold. Hence *Solomons* compariſon (*Prov.* 26. 1.) *As Snow in Summer, ſo honour is not comely for a fool.* Snow is a goodly white robe upon the Winter-body of the earth, or upon the body of the earth in Winter; yet how unſeemly is it upon the body of the earth in Summer, hiding and obſcuring

Nive eſt aer or humidus in media regione aeris re- gionem ſubvehens, ſicki in nubem condenſatur & congelatus, inſtar lanæ carminatæ demittitur, pro- tenditque magnas, interdum exiguas, ſequaces in- ter Graecos. Meteor. c. 29.

obſcuring, as well as hurting, that which is the natural beauty and ornament of it; Thus honour is a precious robe, yet no way fitting the back of a fooliſh or undeſerving perſon. Snow is very improper and unnatural in Summer, becauſe the coldneſs of it hinders the ripening of the corn, and other fruits of the earth: And therefore when *Solomon* ſaith (*Chap.* 25. 13.) *As the cold of ſnow in the time of Summer, ſo is a faithful meſſenger to him that ſendeth him.* His meaning is not, that the falling of ſnow is either comfortable or ſeaſonable in the time of Summer, but that ſnow gathered in Winter, and reſerved (as the cuſtome is in hot countries) till Summer, being put into drink doth exceedingly cool it, and ſo refreſheth thoſe who are ready to faint with heat.

But not to go further from the Text in hand; we ſee that Snow and Rain have the ſame original, both being formed out of vapours. As in mans body (who is a little world) from the Stomack there riſe up vapours to the Head, which by the coldneſs of the brain are changed into, and ſent back again in Rheumes and Catarrs: So vapours drawn up from the Earth into the Air, are ſent back in Snow and Rain. *Solomon* deſcribing the infirmities of old age, alludes to this, while he warnes the young man, that thus the *Clouds will return after the Rain* (Eccl. 12. 2.) which may be underſtood either more generally of that ſucceſſion of troubles to which old age is ſubject, or more particularly of Rheum and Flegm wherewith old age is moleſted; the defluxion of the Rheum being as the Rain, and the gathering of new matter, which continually diſtilleth from the Head upon the Lungs, being as the *returning of the Clouds after the Rain. He ſaith to the Snow*

Be thou on the earth.

The place where Snow is generated is in the Air, from thence it receives a command to diſpatch it ſelf to the Earth, and there to abide; He ſaith to the Snow, *be thou on the Earth*, that is, cover the face of the earth, be thou as a mantle upon the earth, or as a white ſheet ſpread over the whole face of it, until I call or take and diſſolve thee into water. The ſame command which is here thee off expreſt concerning the Snow, is alſo ſent forth to the Rain; *He ſaith to the Snow be thou on the earth,*

Likewiſe

Likewiſe to the ſmall rain, &c.

That is, he ſaith to the *ſmall Rain*, do thou deſcend upon the earth. By *ſmall Rain* is meant any gentle Rain, ſoftly and ſweetly dropping and deſtilling out of the Clouds. Now as God orders this *ſmall Rain*, ſo likewiſe, as it followeth,

The great Rain of his ſtrength.

The whole Original Text, which we render the *ſmall Rain and the great Rain of his ſtrength*, hath a great Elegancy in it, word for word thus, *He ſaith to the ſhowre of Rain, and to the ſhowre of Rains of his ſtrength.* The word *Rain* in both is the ſame, only the former is in the ſingular, and the latter in the plural number, which hightens or encreaſeth the ſence, as Criticks and Grammarians tell us, and therefore we render *ſmall Rain and great Rain*; to which *Elihu* gives this further addition in the cloſe of the verſe, *The great Rain*

Of his ſtrength.

Of whoſe ſtrength? ſurely of the ſtrength of God; as if God did in ſome Rain put forth his mighty ſtrength, and make bare his own Arm in the ſhowrs which he ſends upon the earth. *The great Rain of his ſtrength* is that violent Rain which comes forth from God and ſhews forth to us the great ſtrength of God: For neither of thoſe two Epithetes *ſmall and great* are expreſly in the Text, yet both the ſcope and Grammatical conſtruction of the words juſtifie that Tranſlation, *A ſhowre of Rain* in the ſingular number implying a mild gentle Rain, or, as we call it, a *ſmall Rain*; and a *ſhowre of Rains* in the plural number implying a continued, vehement, fierce Rain, or as we call it, *a great Rain*, eſpecially having that remarkable adjunct following, *of his ſtrength.* When the Lord promiſed to give *ſhowres of Rain* for the a king (*Zach.* 10. 1.) he meant a plentiful ſtrong Rain; by which alſo he intended to ſignifie the abundance of ſpiritual gifts and graces, which he would pour down upon the Church. So much for the opening of this verſe, *For he ſaith to the Snow, be thou on the Earth, likewiſe to the ſmall Rain, and to the great Rain of his ſtrength.*

First, From the cauſal particle, *for*, which referreth to the former words, *God doth marveilous things which we cannot comprehend,*

גשם מטר וגשם מטרות

Et imbri pluviæ & imbri pluviarum potentiæ ejus. Heb.

Imber eſt agmen cœleſtium aquarum & pluviarum. Nonius.

Concervatio hæc nominum et genitivus ille pluralis vehementiſſimum & procelloſum imbrem, ſignificat. Merc.

Cum duo nomina copulantur idem fere ſignificantia quorum poſterius ponitur loco adjectivi alterum determinantis, ſi fuerit pluralis numeri erit ſuperlativæ ſignificationis. Bold.

Imber pluviarum, quaſi ex multis pluviis conſtans. Druſ.

hend, for, he ſaith to the Snow, and to the ſmall Rain, &c.

Obſerve;

The Snow and Rain are to be written in the Catalogue of Gods wonderful works.

What more common than Snow and Rain? and yet, as common as they are, they have wonders in them. Some of the Ancients have obſerved many VVonders in the Snow, ſuch as theſe.

Firſt, That being in its own nature ſo extreamly cold, yet it is formed in that part of the Air which is comparatively near the earth, and ſo hath more heat in it.

Secondly, That Snow being ſo exceeding cold, doth yet by Gods Command fall in ſome very hot Countries, even in the hotteſt of Sommer. Geographers tell us of Snow in many places of *Tartary*, which are extreamly hot.

Thirdly, they give this as a VVonder, That whereas it never Snows at all upon the Main Ocean, yet there is an Iſland ſpoken of by *Pliny*, called (*Nivaria* from *Nix*) *the Snow Iſle*, which, though compaſſed with the Sea, is alwayes covered with Snow.

Plin. lib. 6. cap. 32. Nat. Hiſtor.

Fourthly, this is given as a Wonder, That Snow being ſo apt to melt by heat, yet Mount *Ætna*, which is full of *Sulphur*, and caſts out flames of fire continually, hath the Head of it hidden continually under or covered with a Cap of Snow.

Fifthly, That in ſome places VVorms are bred and live in the Snow of a fiery colour.

Sixthly, That the Snow, though it be very cold and chilling, hath in it a fecundating or fatning power, as to the earth, is alſo wonderful. Snow is a great cheriſher and nouriſher of Plants and Trees, of Corn and Graſs; and therefore *David* ſaith (*Pſal.* 147. 15, 16.) *He giveth Snow like Wool, and hoary Froſt like aſhes.* There are three things conſiderable in Snow, for which it is compared to VVool. Firſt, for the whiteneſs of it. Snow is white as VVool; Snow is ſo exceeding white, that the whiteneſs of a Soul cleanſed by pardoning Grace, in the blood of Chriſt, is likened to it (*Iſa.* 1. 18.) and the latter part of the ſame verſe intimates, that the whiteneſs of Snow bears reſemblance to that of VVool. The whiteneſs of Snow is cauſed by the abundance of Air

Air and ſpirits that are in that pelluvid Body, as the Naturaliſts ſpeak: Any thing that is of a watery ſubſtance being frozen or much wrought upon by cold, appears more white. And hence it is that all perſons inhabiting cold Climates or Countries, are of a whiter complexion than they who inhabite hot.

Cauſa albedinis eſt Spiritus aeriſque copia in corpore diaphano. Ariſt. lib. 2. de Mundo.

Secondly, Snow is like Wool for ſoftneſs, 'tis as plyable to the hand, as a Lock or Fleece of Wool.

Thirdly, Snow is like Wool (which may ſeem ſtrange) with reſpect to the warmneſs of it. Though Snow be cold in it ſelf, as I ſaid before, yet it is to the earth as Wool, or as a woolen cloth or blanket, that keeps the body warm. Snow is not warm formally, yet it is warm effectively and vertually, and therefore is it compared to Wool; and for that reſpect alſo the hoary Froſt is ſaid to be like aſhes, in the ſame place of the *Pſalm*: Aſhes are warm, Froſt is cold, yet that is a known expreſſion, *burning cold*, that is, there is an effect in Froſt, in the hoary Froſt, of heat; things are kept warm by that which is contrary to warmth, *Froſt and Snow.* Naturaliſts have beat their Brains, but can aſſign no ſatisfying reaſon of theſe things, and therefore we muſt aſcribe them eſpecially to the power and wiſdome of God. Theſe particulars laid together are a ſufficient witneſs, that even Snow and Rain are to be reckoned with, and numbred among the wonderful works of God.

Urens frigus. Prunam dici volunt Grammatici quaſi urinam, quod urat arbores & flores.

Hence Note, Secondly;

God can do what he will by a word ſpeaking.

And as himſelf can do what he will by his word, ſo he can make the creature do what he will by his word. This goodly Fabrick of the World was made by his word, and all the creatures in the world will preſently act upon a word from God (*Pſal.* 33. 9.) *He ſpake and it was done, he commanded and it ſtood faſt*; Gods ſaying is doing. This is a point of high conſolation to all the people of God; what-ever their affliction is, God can command them out of it; what-ever their wants are, God can command a ſupply for them. He that ſaith to the natural Snow and to the Rain, to Stormes and Tempeſts, be ye upon the earth, can alſo ſay to the Snow and Rain, to the Stormes and Tempeſts of trouble, be ye not upon the earth; He can do or undo, by his word, as himſelf pleaſeth. 'Tis alſo matter of great terror to all that riſe up againſt, and diſobey the word of the great God; for though they be

they ſee nothing at hand to interrupt them, nothing to check them in the way of their luſts, though they look upon themſelves beyond the reach of danger, yet 'tis but a word ſpeaking from God, and they are wrapt up in Snow, and hurrican'd with a Storm and Tempeſt; *He ſaith to the Snow*, &c. This irreſiſtible force of a word from God, was noted alſo upon thoſe words in the 9th Chapter (*verſ.* 7.) *He commandeth the Sun and it riſeth not.* The Sun will not appear, or it will hide it ſelf in an Eclipſe, or Cloud, and darken the whole earth, if God do but give a command.

Thirdly, take the point yet more ſtrictly and reſtrainedly, as here in the text, *He ſaith to the Snow and to the Rain.*

Snow and Rain are at the command of God.

Non tibi videantur caſibus moveri qui verbo Dei in omni motu ſuo deſerviunt. Quo vult Deus illuc ferturnubes ſive pluviam ſive nivem, ſive grandinem portat. Auguſt. in Pſal. 148.

(Pſal. 147. 15, 16.) *He ſendeth forth his commandment upon earth, his word runneth very ſwiftly*; that word referrs to the particular matter in hand, as appeareth in the very next Verſe, and the two which follow; *He giveth Snow like wool, he ſcattereth the hoar Froſt like aſhes, he caſteth forth his Ice like morſels* &c. *David* applies the ſwift running of Gods word to theſe things; and how ſwiftly theſe run on his errands we may ſee (1 *Kings* 18. 44.) For whereas there had been no rain for three years & a half, according to the word of *Elijah* the Prophet, God did but ſay to the Rain, come, and it came; and though *Elijahs* Servant, at firſt, ſaw a very ſmall appearance of it, only *a Cloud like a mans hand*, yet preſently the whole heavens were masked over with Clouds, and there was a mighty rain, *The great rain of his ſtrength. Rain, and Snow, and Vapours quickly fulfil his word* (Pſal. 148.8.) God is *the Lord of hoſts*, and theſe creatures are his hoſt, theſe as well as men and angels are his hoſts (*Pſal.* 24. 10.) *Who is this king of glory? the Lord of hoſts is the king of glory*; and 'tis the great glory of God, that he hath ſuch hoſts at his command: None of the Princes or Powers of this world have any ſuch; How long may they ſend their commands to the Snow before it will come, or to the Rain before they can get a drop of it! neither the one nor the other will ſtir at the command of man, but at the command of God they haſte away.

And if when the Lord ſaith to the Snow and to the Rain, come, and they come, abide upon the earth, and they abide there, how will this reprove and condemn thouſands of the children of men,

men, to whom the Lord ſpeaks and ſpeaks again and again, he ſends out his commandment, and his word runs very ſwiftly to them, yet they ſtir not, they move not! Surely Snow and Rain will riſe up in judgement againſt thoſe, to whom the Lord hath ſaid, *do this*, and they did it not, to whom the Lord hath ſaid, *do not this*, yet they did it. The word repreſents all ſorts of Creatures below man, as well as the Angels above man, readily obeying the command of God, to teach man how readily he ſhould obey his commands, and how greatly he ſhall be condemned if he do not, and that not only by the Angels in heaven, but by the Snow and Rain that fall upon the earth.

Fourthly, From the deſtinction which is here made of the rain, the *ſmall rain*, and *the great rain of his ſtrength*,

Note;

In what degree or quantity ſoever the rain falls, it is by the ſpecial appointment of God.

If it be a ſmall, gentle, ſoaking rain, it is becauſe God hath ſpoken to the ſmall rain to go; if it be a great, a violent, a ſmoaking rain, a rain of his ſtrength, it is becauſe God hath ſaid to the great rain, go: We are not to ſtick in ſecond cauſes, but to have our hearts raiſed higher, both as to the rain it ſelf, and to the proportions of it. *He maketh ſmall the drops of rain*, as 'tis ſaid at the 27th Verſe of the former Chapter, and he can make great the drops of rain, or the drops of rain great; he can caſt the rain into what mold he pleaſeth, great or ſmall; it ſhall be a ſweetly-diſtilling rain, or it ſhall be, as *Solomon* ſpeakes, a fiercely *ſweeping rain* (Prov. 28. 3.) where he compares the poor man that oppreſſeth, to a ſweeping rain. God hath ſweeping rains, and as 'tis ſaid (*Ezek.* 13. 13.) *overflowing ſhowres* in his hand; and he ſometimes ſends, not a watering ſhowre, not a refreſhing or comforting ſhowre in mercy, not a ſhowre to enrich and fatten the earth, but an overflowing ſhowre to drown the earth and deſtroy the fruits of it in his anger; and this is true, whether you take the ſhowre properly, or metaphorically. If you take the ſhowre properly for that which falls from heaven, he ſends the refreſhing, & he ſends the overflowing ſhowre; or if you take it metaphorically (a ſhowre may ſignifie any kind or degree of judgement) he can ſend one judgement which ſhall be as ſmall rain, and

and he can ſend another which ſhall be as great rain, as the rain of his ſtrength, an overflowing ſhowre: He can ſend forth (as that alluſion is uſed, *Jer.* 12. 5.) *his footmen*, and he can ſend forth *his horſemen*, greater or leſſer Judgments, as himſelf pleaſeth; he proportions and cuts them out according to his own infinite wiſdome and righteous will.

Laſtly, From theſe words, *He ſaith to the ſnow, abide on the earth, or be thou on the earth*, ſtay there, and ſo to the rain,

Obſerve;

Snow or Rain continue or ſtay upon the face of the earth till God calls them off.

When he ſaith, be ye upon the earth, upon the earth they will be, until the ſame power that ſent them, fetch them back again. Theſe hoſts are like a well ordered and well diſciplined army, wherein Souldiers ſent out by the order of their General or ſuperiour Officers, muſt ſtay at their poſt where they are appointed, they muſt abide, till called off, upon pain of death: Be thou there, ſaith the Commander to his Souldier, be thou there till I fetch thee off; and when, after ſignal given, the battel begins, the Souldier never leaves charging or purſuing the enemy, till the trumpet ſound a retreat. So 'tis in this caſe, God ſaith to the Rain, be upon the earth till thou haſt wrought my purpoſe and done all my pleaſure, and there it is.

Thus we ſee the efficacy of Gods command upon theſe Meteors, the Snow and the Rain; now follow the effects, or what comes of it.

Firſt, we have that effect which reſpects man;

Verſ. 7. *He ſealeth up the hand of every man.*

He, That is, God,

Sealeth up the hand;

Sealing, in Scripture, hath a threefold ſignification.

חתם *Prohibere, claudere, occultare.*

Firſt, It notes the hiding of a thing, or the keeping of it ſecret and cloſe; that which is ſealed, is alſo concealed (*Iſa.* 8. 16.) *Bind up the Teſtimony, ſeal the Law among my diſciples.* There is a time wherein God commands the Law to be ſealed, and the Teſtimony to be bound up, and that is a very ſad time; for though there are various

various apprehenſions about the meaning of this command given the Prophet, yet the moſt probable intendment of it is, that God would not have him loſe any more time in dealing with thoſe faithleſs and profane ſcoffers of his meſſage, but reſerve thoſe ſacred myſteries, as ſecrets, to be communicated only to the faithful, who would with due reverence and faith religiouſly receive them. *Seal the Law among, or for my diſciples*, that is, ſuch as deſire to learn, or have been taught and learned of me, and by learning are become ſpiritually skilful and learned, as the word is rendred (*Iſa.* 50. 4.) Woe to ſinners when the Teſtimony is bound and the Law ſealed; which is the import (I conceive) of that place in the ſame Prophet (*Iſa.* 29. 11.) And when in the *Revelation* (*Chap.* 4. 1.) a Book ſealed with ſeven ſeals was ſhewed to *John*, he wept (*verſ.* 4.) becauſe *no man was found worthy to open, and to read the Book*, &c. implying, that the Book was full of divine ſecrets, hidden from the eyes or underſtandings of men, and ſo muſt have continued, *if the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David*, that is, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *had not prevailed to open the Book, and to loſe the ſeven ſeals thereof.* Sealed things are hidden things. *Is not this* (ſaid the Lord, *Deut.* 32. 34.) *laid up in ſtore with me, and ſealed up among my treaſures?* That is, is it not kept cloſe and hidden there? are not their curſed treaſures of ſin laid up among my righteous treaſures of wrath? The Church (*Cant.* 4. 12.) is called, *a Fountain ſealed*, becauſe the waters by which ſhe is refreſhed and made fruitful are a hidden thing to the world, or becauſe the Church muſt keep her ſelf apart and diſtinct from the prophane and unbelieving world. That's one thing, we ſeal what we would hide or keep cloſe.

Secondly, the word importeth ſometimes, to finiſh or compleat a thing. When a Writing is perfected then we ſeal it, when a Letter is made up we ſeal it: to that purpoſe the word is uſed (*Dan.* 9. 24.) Where the Prophet ſpeaking of Chriſts coming in the fleſh, and what he ſhould then do, ſaith, *He ſhall finiſh tranſgreſſion*, that is, he ſhall compleat, by the ſacrifice of himſelf, all the ſacrifices for tranſgreſſion. Chriſt had no hand in any tranſgreſſion, as to the doing of it, but in this ſence he finiſhed all tranſgreſſion; that is, he finiſhed the ſacrifices of atonement for tranſgreſſion, that ſo our tranſgreſſions might not be charged upon us. Further, that word, as there uſed, may very well bear the firſt

ſence:

ſence of ſealing; *He ſhall ſeal tranſgreſſion*, that is, he ſhall cover or hide our tranſgreſſions, for that is the effect of the Mediatorſhip of Jeſus Chriſt.

Thirdly, To ſeal a thing is (in common ſence) to confirm it (*Jer.* 32. 10, 11.) *I* (ſaid the Prophet) *ſubſcribed the Evidence and ſealed it*; that is, I confirmed it and made it good in Law. Now when 'tis ſaid here, *He ſealeth up the hand of every man*, I conceive we are to take it in the firſt ſence, that is, he hideth or ſhuts up every mans hand. The hand is the chief inſtrument of working, and therefore to ſay, God ſhuts up or ſeals the hand, is an elegant Metaphor, ſignifying that God puts a ſtop or ſtay to, or that he takes men off from their work. If a mans hands be bound or ſealed up he cannot uſe them.

Hiems in vis dicitur quod homines segnat deſidere inertes & corpiicum motibus.

But how doth God ſeal up the hand of every man, of every working man or labourer? By the Snow and by the Rain, ſaith *Elihu*; becauſe when God ſends abundance of Snow upon the earth, or when he ſends the great Rain of his ſtrength, men cannot work; in a deep ſnow, or in a great rain, without doors, Labourers are hindered from their labour: And hence anciently, Winter had this title given it, *dull or ſluggiſh Winter*; becauſe in the extreamity of winter weather, many men are forced to ſit (as we ſay) with their hands in their pockets, or folded under their armes. *He ſealeth up the hand of every man*, that is, by tempeſtuous and foul weather, he bindes their hands and preſſeth them together as with a Seal.

In manu omnes homines obſignabit. Mont.

The Hebrew is, *In the hand he will ſeal*, or, *ſealeth every man*. From which ſtrict reading, ſome have made a very impious interpretation of this Text, thereupon grounding that (as moſt uſe it) moſt unwarrantable Art of *Chiromancy*, as if God did put certain Lines, Prints, or Seals upon the hand of every man, from whence it may be collected and concluded, what (as ſome call it) his Fortune or Deſtiny will be in the world. Which, as it is an opinion wicked in it ſelf, ſo altogether herrogeneal to this place, the tendency whereof is not to ſhew how things ſhall work with men hereafter, but how they are often hindered or ſtopt in, or from their preſent work.

כיד *Vehementia omnem hominem recludit.* Merc. pagn.

There is yet another reading of the place, thus, *He ſealeth up every man with ſtrength*. The word which we tranſlate *hand*, they tranſlate *ſtrength*, and refer it to God; he with ſtreng h, or by his

his mighty power ſhuts up every man. The word *hand* may be rendred *ſtrength*, becauſe by the hand men act violently and put forth their ſtrength. And God may be ſaid to ſhew his ſtrength in ſo ſoft and fluid a thing as ſnow and rain, that thereby he may give proof, how eaſily, or with how ſmall a matter in appearance, he can ſtop any man from his work and purpoſe. There is a truth in this reading, but I rather take the words as they ſtand in our tranſlation, not as noting the hand or power of God ſealing men, but Gods ſealing the hands of men, putting them off from or beſides their labour. Thus by Snow and Rain he ſealeth or ſhutteth up the hand of every man; and why ſo? the reaſon is given in the next words,

That all men might know his work.

God by extraordinary Snowes and Raines ſtops men from their work. But what, Is it that they ſhould be idle? No, but that *they may know his work*. Whoſe work?

Some underſtand it of mans own work; As if the meaning were this; God ſtops men a while from further or preſent work, that they may take a view of their paſt works; or he takes them off from their civil works and employments, that they may employ themſelves in conſidering their moral works; as the Prophet admoniſhed the Jews (*Iſa.* 1. 5.) *Now therefore, thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, conſider your wayes.* Another Prophet reproved them for the neglect of this duty (*Jer.* 8. 6.) *No man ſaith, what have I done?* The Lord often brings his people to hard ſufferings that they may know their own doings or works. This is a profitable ſenſe; yet I rather conceive that the work here intended is Gods work, and ſo I ſhall proſecute the words, *That all men may know his work.*

This work of God may be taken two wayes.

Firſt, More ſtrictly; thus God by rain ſhuts up the hands of men from their work, that they may know, thoſe extraordinary ſtormes of Snow and Rain, which drive them in from their labour, and ſhut up their hands from working, are his ſpecial work. Great Snowes & Raines declare to all men the great power of God, who doth not only aſtoniſh men by terrible thunder and lightning, but can by Snow and Rain (his much weaker weapons) put them beſide their purpoſe, and ſtop their work.

Secondly,

Secondly, Take his *work* more largly; God ſealeth up the hands of men, that they having a vacancy from their own work may conſider his; he doth as it were force them from what they were doing or intended to do, that ſo they may have leiſure to take notice of what he hath done, *That all men may know his work.*

Hence note, Firſt;

God can hinder or ſtop any man or all men in their work.

He, when, and as he pleaſeth, can ſeal up the hand of every man. If God hath a mind to work, none can lett him (*Iſa.* 43. 13.) Who can ſeal the hand of God? I may ſay alſo, whoſe hand cannot God ſeal? How eaſily did the Lord ſeal up the hand of the builders of *Babel* (*Gen.* 11. 7.) They were hot upon a mighty work; but God by confounding their tongues, ſealed their hands, and they (as 'tis ſaid, *v.* 8.) *Left off to build the City.*

Secondly, When the text ſaith, *God ſealeth up the hand of every man, that all men may know his work,*

Obſerve;

How diligent ſoever men are about their own works, yet they are ſlow enough, too too ſlow to take notice of the works of God.

When the hand of God is lifted up ſome will not ſee it, they are not only backward to ſee it, but oppoſite to the ſeeing of it; and though others do not ſet themſelves againſt, yet they do not ſet themſelves to the knowledge of his works. 'Tis a great and common ſin, our not ſtudying to know the works of God; we ſhould ſtudy the works of God as much as we do the word of God; we ſhould ſtudy both his work of Creation, and his works of Providence, whether works of Mercy, or of Judgment; we ſhould endeavour to know all his works.

From the univerſality of the expreſſion, *that all men may know his work,*

Note;

God would have all ſtudy this Book, the book of his works.

They whoſe buſineſs and labours lie in fields, the Plow-men and the Vine-dreſſers, he would have them know his works, as thoſe

thoſe ſpecial works of his, the Snow and the Rain, ſo his works in general. The meaneſt of men cannot excuſe their ignorance of the works of God, ſeing the Text and Point tell us, God drives them many times out of the field, home to their houſes, and will not let them do a ſtroak of work more abroad, on purpoſe that they might know his work.

Hence note, Thirdly;

The aim and intendment of God in keeping us at any time from our work, is that we may know more of his works.

It is a great part of our wiſdom to anſwer the deſignes of God in all his providences to us. We ſeldom think what God intends by a wet day, by a rainy day, by a tempeſtuous day, we little think the aim of God in calling us from our works, is to call us to the conſideration of his work. Some men would never find a time to beſtow their thoughts upon the works of God, if God did not take them off from their own work; they would never be at leiſure, if he did not give them a leiſure, a vacation time, and as here in this text, ſeal up their hand. God hath various wayes to take men off from the hotteſt purſuits of their own works; he takes many off from them by ſickneſs, he binds them as priſoners to their beds; others are taken off from their own buſineſs by proper impriſonment, and reſtraint of liberty; and why? what is the reaſon of this? is it not that they may know his work, that they may well conſider the dealings of God with them? A ſick bed is a School, and ſo is a Priſon, where we ſhould ſtudy both the Word and Works of God. Let us remember, when-ever God takes us off from our Callings by ſickneſs, or reſtraineth our liberty by impriſonment, his gracious purpoſe is, that we may know his work. Poſſibly when we had liberty to go about our own work, we could find little, or would not find much leiſure to meditate upon the works of God. Well, ſaith God, I ſee I muſt take you off from your works, elſe you will never be Students in mine. That's the effect of Snow and Rain, with reference to man, *He ſealeth up the hand of every man that all men may know his work.*

But here we have another effect, with reſpect to beaſts.

Vers. 8. *Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places.*

חיה. *Potius fera quam bestia, a vivacitate, nam eadem vox vitam significat.* Drus.

There are two words in the Hebrew which signifie bruits, or beasts. The word here used properly signifies *wild beasts*, the other tame beasts, such as are for our ute, and brought up to our hand. The text intends the wild beasts, the beasts of the forrest, the beasts of prey, *they go into dens*, these seek shelter in snow time, or when the great rain of the strength of God falleth upon the earth. The Psalmist (*Psal.* 104. 20.) describes the beasts ordinarily going out of their dens when the night comes; *Then* (saith he) *all the beasts of the forrest go forth.* Here we have the beasts, whether night or day, driven to their dens by a storm, or by the Snow; then they go to their dens and places of shelter, or, as we speak, to *Covert*. The word rendred *Dens*, signifies a place of ambush, or of lying in wait; such are the dens of wild beasts; as it is said of the wicked (*Psal.* 10. 9.) *He lieth in wait secretly, as a Lion in his den, to catch the poor*, &c. It is this word. Such kind of retreats have the wild beasts, they have their dens, which are also places to watch for their prey: And as they often go to their dens upon choice, or of their own accord, so they are sometimes driven to them (as in the text) for shelter against a storm. *Then the beasts go into dens,*

ארב *Ereb, a verbo Arab, insidiari. Et ingreditur bestia in insidias, i. e. in latibula unde insidiatur.* Merc.

And remain in their places.

They not only *go into dens*, but there *they remain*, they keep home, the storm keps them in. As when the flood of waters, the great rain of Gods strength, was upon the earth, *Noah* was shut into the Ark, and there he remained (*Gen.* 7.) he did not only go in, but stayed in till the flood was asswaged; so it is said here of the beasts, they remain in their places, they will not budge nor peep out till the storm be over.

Hence note, First;

The Providences of God in various seasons, affect the very beasts of the earth.

Those creatures which live only a life of sense, yet partake somewhat of reason, at least, they act according to reason; they are sensible of what God doth, though they know not that he doth it.

it. And is not this a great reproof to those, who are not only not sensible of, but slight those severer dispensations of God? how beast-like are those men, who have not so much sence of the dealings of God as the beasts have! who though they have a knowledge beyond bruits, yet they use their knowledge no better, no nor so well as bruits; and so they are either (as the Prophet saith) *bruitish in their knowledge*, or as the Apostle *Peter* (2 *Pet.* 2. 12.) *They are as bruit beasts* (in humane shape) *made to be taken and destroyed.* How can they avoid being taken and destroyed by the judgments of God, or as *Elihu* expresseth it, by the great *rain of his strength*, who take not so much notice of them, as to see their danger and get into a hiding place? For,

Secondly, When the beasts go into dens and remain in their places, what is it that moves them to it? Surely 'tis to be (as we say) out of harms way.

Hence note;

Every creature by the light of nature would get out of danger.

Great snowes and rains of strength are dangerous or grievous to beasts, therefore they avoid them; they will not stand in the open air while a storm lasts, if they can help it. Beasts will save themselves as well as they can; and if so, then take these two Inferences from it.

First, *For our instruction. We are sent to school by God himself more than once to the beasts and creeping things of the earth. Solomon* sends us to the Ant, a creeping thing, he bids us *consider her wayes, and be wise. Elihu*, in this text, sends us to the wild beasts of the earth, to Lions and Bares, to Tigers and Wolves, and bids us consider their wayes and be wise. Here is matter of instruction for us; What is that? *Get out of harmes way*, make haste out of danger; when the cold Snow comes, and the great Rain of the strength of God, take heed you be not found abroad without a shelter. Surely God who hath provided dens for the beasts, and places for those wilde creatures to hide themselves in, hath not left us without a niding-place, when the great rains of trouble fall, or threaten to fall. God invited his people of old, where to look for and whither to go for shelter in such a rainy day (*Isa.* 26. 20.) *Come my people, enter thou into thy Chambers, and shut thy door about*

bout thee; hide thy ſelf as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be over-paſt. For, *Behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to puniſh the Inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.* As if he had ſaid, *Hide your ſelves till the ſtorm be over*, till the great rain of my ſtrength be gone. God, who hath put an inſtinct into the creatures to go to their dens, to their places in a ſtormy ſeaſon, doth ſpecially call to men, and among men, ſpecially to his own people, when 'tis a time of indignation, to go into their Chambers and hide themſelves till it be overblown. Do not ſtand out in the rain, do not ſtand in the ſtorm, get into your chambers; what are theſe Chambers? ſurely not the chambers of our houſes, they are poor refuges, the rain of his ſtrength will break or ſoak into thoſe chambers, how well ſoever roofed or ceiled. The chambers in which the people of God are called to hide themſelves, are God himſelf; the Power of God, the Faithfulneſs of God, the Truth of God, the Goodneſs of God, in theſe Chambers he calls his people to hide themſelves. *Solomon* aſſureth us (*Prov.* 81. 10.) *The Name of the Lord is a ſtrong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is ſafe.* As God hath taught the beaſts to run into their dens, ſo he inſtructs us in his Word to run into his Name, as to a ſtrong tower, where we may be ſafe. *David* ſaid (*Pſal.* 57. 1.) *Under the ſhadow of thy Wings ſhall be my refuge until this calamity be over-paſt*; That is, I will put my ſelf under thy protection, while the ſtormy ſhowers laſt. The Hen gathereth her *young ones* under her wings; ſo would Chriſt the Jewiſh Nation, both for comfort and ſafety, and they refuſed him; What followed? The next verſe tells us, *Deſolation*. What could ſave them when the *Roman Eagle* ſpread her wings againſt them, who would not come under the wing of Jeſus Chriſt! (*Matth.* 23. 37.) 'Tis not any worldly refuge, not any arm of fleſh, but the ſhadow of the Lords wings that can hide us in an evil day from the evil of the day. They who get and keep cloſe to God by Faith, need not fear the worſt ſtormes which this world can raiſe againſt them.

And hence, let ſinners in general take warning; ſuppoſe you ſhould live all your dayes in this world without a ſtorm, I mean, without any outward trouble, yet remember, there will be a ſtormy day, the day of the great rain of the ſtrength of God will come, he will rain down vengeance upon all the ungodly in that day; *Upon the wicked he ſhall rain ſnares, fire and brimſtone, and an*

an horrible tempeſt in that day (*Pſal.* 11. 6.) Therefore ſee that you have a refuge againſt that day, when many ſhall (as it is ſaid, *Rev.* 6.) *Call to the rocks, hide us, and to the mountains, fall upon us, cover us from the preſence of him that ſits on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.* Although we ſhould have proſperity or fair weather as long as we live in this world, yet there is a day of wrath coming; be not then to ſeek of a hiding place, which is only to be had in and by Jeſus Chriſt; He is the man chiefly intended by the Prophet (*Iſa.* 32. 2.) *That ſhall be a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempeſt.* If you are without him in that day, you ſtand naked to the wrath of God, and that will quickly ſoak into you, or ſink you for ever.

Secondly, As the beaſts going to their dens for ſhelter, may inſtruct us, ſo it may reprove and upbraid us, and it will be at laſt a dreadful reproof, upon all that are backward in this thing, to provide themſelves of a Covert againſt the Storm. The *Jewes* (as hath been formerly touch't) were upbraided with *the Crane, the Turtle, and the Swallow*, becauſe they knew the time of their coming (*Jer.* 8. 7.) They knew when ſuch a Countrey would be unfit, or unſafe for their ſtay, and therefore they removed to places more comfortable to, and commodious for them: *But* (ſaith he) *my people know not the judgement of the Lord.* As if he had ſaid, my people have not ſo much wit or fore-caſt as the Crane, and the Swallow, they know not what is good and ſafe, much leſs, what is beſt and ſafeſt for themſelves; let it ſnow and rain never ſo faſt, either they ſtand it out and out-dare it, or they ſeek ſuch coverts from it, as cannot be a covering to them.

'Tis ſaid, the very Vermine, Mice and Rats, will (by a natural preſage) come out of a houſe that is ready to fall. They are more ſenſeleſs than Mice or Rats, who haſten not to a place of ſafety, when they perceive the foundation of that ſinful State wherein they ſtand, ſinking, and the walls cracking on every hand. How faithleſs then are they, how preſumptuous and ſenſeleſs who haſten not out of *Babylon*, when they hear the Scriptures of truth ſaying not only that *Babylon* ſhall fall, or is falling, but, as of a thing already done and paſt, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*! Is it not dangerous to ſtay in a falling houſe, in a houſe which ſhall ſo certainly fall, that 'tis ſaid, and ſaid again, *'tis fallen, 'tis fallen.* O take heed of a hard heart when you hear of a falling houſe, or of a ſtorm ready

to,

to fall upon your heads. When God threatned *Pharaoh* to bring a ſtorm of hail upon the land of *Egypt* (that was indeed a rain of his ſtrength) a mighty rain of hail, the text ſaith (*Exod.* 9. 20.) *He that feared the word of the Lord amongſt the ſervants of Pharaoh, made his ſervants and his cattel flee into the houſes*; but they whoſe hearts were hardned, let them ſtay abroad, and ſo they periſhed. Sinners, you hear of a worſe ſtorm of hail threatned than that which fell upon *Egypt*, even the great rain of the ſtrength of the Lords wrath, revealed from heaven againſt you; ſhall the beaſts in ſuch a day of diſtreſs go into dens, and remain in their places, and do you think to abide the day of the Lords terrible coming? Do you think to ſtand it out when he appeareth? The Prophet foreſhewing the day of Chriſts firſt coming in frail fleſh, ſaid (*Mal.* 3. 2.) *Who may abide the day of his coming? and who ſhall ſtand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiners fire, and like fullers ſope.* Now if the day of Chriſts firſt coming was ſuch as ſinners could not abide, when he came only with *refining fire* to fetch out the droſs of their ſins, and purge away their corruptions, ſhall ſinners (impenitent and unbelieving ſinners I mean) preſume that they ſhall be able to abide or endure that day of his ſecond coming, when he ſhall come with conſuming fire to puniſh and take vengeance on them for their ſins! Away with theſe vain confidences, which (as the Prophet told the *Jewes*, *Jer.* 2. 37.) *the Lord will certainly reject, and in which you can never proſper*, and go into thoſe *holes of the rock*, the wounds of a crucified Saviour, in which, and in which only, you may be ſafe and ſaved for ever, from the Snow and great Rain of Gods ſtrength, the power of his anger, which none know at preſent (*Pſal.* 90. 11.) but all muſt feel, who are not ſheltred from it by *Jeſus Chriſt, who delivereth us from the wrath to come* (1 Theſ. 1. 10.)

JOB,

JOB, Chap. 37. Verſ. 9, 10, 11.

9. *Out of the South cometh the Whirlwind, and cold out of the North.*
10. *By the breath of God Froſt is given; and the breadth of the Waters is ſtraitned.*
11. *Alſo by watering he wearieth the thick Cloud: he ſcattereth his bright Cloud.*

Elihu having ſpoken of Thunder and Lightning, as alſo of Snow and Rain, with their effects upon man and beaſt, at the 6th, 7th and 8th verſes laſt opened, he in the 9th and 10th verſes ſpeaks of the Winds, with their effects; firſt, Cold: Secondly, Froſt: or, firſt, of the VVind; ſecondly, of the Cold; and thirdly, of the Froſt; and then at the 11th verſe, of the wonderful works of God in diſpoſing and diſperſing the water in the Clouds, for the refreſhing of the earth by Rain in its ſeaſon.

In the 9th and 10th verſes (I ſay) he diſcourſeth of the Winds; and though there be four Cardinal or principal VVinds, the Eaſt, VVeſt, North and South, which are ſubdivided into thirty-two VVinds according to the Mariners Compaſs, yet here *Elihu* treats by name of two VVinds only, the South-VVind, and the North-VVind; which two are often and eminently ſpoken of in Scripture; which two, as they come from directly contrary Points in the Heavens, ſo they produce contrary effects, famouſly known among men, on earth. And therefore, I conceive, *Elihu* gives inſtance only about them, as being more generally taken notice of.

Verſ. 9. *Out of the South cometh the Whirlwind*, &c.

The word which we render *the South*, properly ſignifieth a *Chamber*, an inner Room, or ſecret place, *a Chamber within a Chamber*, which is the moſt private, retiring Room or Chamber: *Gen.* 43. 30. *Judg.* 16. 9. 2 *Sam.* 13. 10. 1 *Kings* 20. 30. *Cant.* 3. 4. VVe ſay, *Out of the South*, &c. And the Reaſon why the South is expreſſed by that word which ſignifieth a ſecret Chamber, is, becauſe the South Pole is ſcituate or placed in the moſt.

חדר *Cubiculum interius, penetrale; omne quod in intimis partibus eſt.*

Polus Antarcticus occultatur a nobis, utpote depreſſus ſub noſtro Horizonte, ſecundum quantitatem qua Polus Arcticus ſuper Horizontem elevatur. Aquin.

ἐκ ταμείων ἐπερχόνται ὀδύναι.

E promptuariis ſuperveniunt dolores. Sept.

moſt ſecret part of the VVorld, as to them who inhabit Northern Climates; they who live neareſt the North Pole, are fartheſt removed from the South. And as the ſame word in the Hebrew Tongue ſignifieth the South and an inner Chamber, ſo at the 9th Chapter of this Book (*verſ.* 9.) we read of *the Chambers of the South.* The Septuagint render, *He bringeth the Wind, or Whirlwind, out of his Cellar.* Cellars or Store-houſes being ſecret places, and removed out of ſight, for the keeping of Goods and VVares that are laid up there; and it is elegantly expreſſed, that VVinds come out of Store-houſes, as if God did lay them up, till he hath occaſion to draw them forth, and uſe them.

Some render it by a general word, *Out of a ſecret place cometh the Whirl wind.*

VVe ſay beſt, *Out of the South*; Firſt, becauſe it is expreſly oppoſed to the North in the Text; Secondly, becauſe Southern VVinds are the ſtrongeſt and moſt vehement VVinds, as the Northern are the coldeſt. For though we find by experience, that ſtrong VVinds blow from all Quarters of Heaven, yet uſually the South brings forth the ſtrongeſt VVinds; and therefore in Scripture a ſudden and violent VVind is called a VVhirl-wind out of the South. VVhen the Prophet would deſcribe an unavoydable coming of Judgment, he ſaith (*Iſa.* 21. 1.) *As Whirlwinds in the South paſs through, ſo it cometh* &c. And again (*Zech.* 9. 14.) *The Lord God ſhall blow the Trumpet, and ſhall go with Whirlwinds of the South.* Both places expreſſing it, according to what was moſt uſually and commonly known, great VVinds coming out of the South. That place (*Pſal.* 126. 4.) is rendred by ſome (not as we, *Turn again our Captivity, O Lord, as the Streams in the South,* but) *Turn again our Captivity, as Storms or Whirlwinds in the South.* The Church prayed that God would make ſome ſudden change of things, like that made by Southern Storms and VVhirlwinds. Yet we are not to underſtand it, as if all Southern VVinds were VVhirlwinds or tempeſtuous; favourable refreſhing VVinds come from thence ſometimes, as may be collected from the 17th verſe of this Chapter, and from *Canticles* the 4th, verſe the 16th, and as is expreſſed (*Acts* 27. 13.) *The South-Wind blew ſoftly.* So that *Elihu* ſpeaks of what is often and uſually done, not of what is alwayes done, when he ſaith, *Out of the South cometh*

Redeamus tua benignitate ab exilio et captivitate, ea celeritate, qua turbo et proceſſa erumpunt ab auſtrali plaga. Bold.

The

The Whirlwind.

סונה

That's wind with an addition, a *Whirlwind* is more than an ordinary wind. Wind is one of thoſe Meteors, which God the Author of Nature hath provided for the uſe of man: It is called by one of the Ancients, the *agitation or flux of the Air.* Much might be ſpoken about the natural cauſes and matter of winds, but I ſhall not inſiſt upon that. A VVhirlwind is a tempeſtuous wind; the Greeks have a ſpecial word for it, and ſo have the Latines, both importing violence, or that which troubles and turns all upſide down, and throweth every thing out of its place: Such a boyſterous thing is the VVhirlwind, 'tis a toſſing, tumbling, breaking, diſturbing wind; this VVhirlwind

Turbo, a Græcis τύφων a Plinio vortex vocatur. Ventus eſt Aeris fluxus ſeu agitatio. Damaſc. *l.* 2. *de Orthod fide.* c. 8.

Cometh out of the South.

It cometh. A like or the ſame expreſſion is applyed to the Sun, (*Pſal.* 19. 3.) *He hath ſet a Tabernacle for the Sun, which is as a Bridegroom coming out of his Chamber, and rejoyceth as a ſtrong man to run a Race.* As the Sun cometh every morning out of his Chamber by Gods appoyntment; ſo doth the VVhirlwind at ſpecial times appointed by God. 'Tis fitly ſaid ſuch fierce and unruly winds *come forth,* for they are as it were kept faſt in priſon till God takes off their Bonds, and opens their Priſon-dore, and then out they come furiouſly and boyſterouſly, to do the work God hath commanded and deſigned them to. *Out of the South cometh the Whirlwind.*

VVhen *Elihu* ſaith, The VVhirlwind, the great VVind cometh out of the South, he doth not expreſs, yet intimates, who it is that brings the VVhirlwind out of the South: The VVhirlwind cometh, but it doth not come before it is ſent. The ſcope of *Elihu* all along is, to ſhew the mighty power of God in ordering and diſpoſing the Meteors, and among them, theſe mighty winds.

Hence Note;

Winds come at Gods appoyntment.

He is the Author of them, he is the diſpoſer of them, he rules their moſt unruly motions. The Heathen Poets feigned a god of the winds, whom they called *Æolus,* who was Pictur'd or Statued puffing the winds out of his mouth. But 'tis *Jehovah* who hath

the

the winds in his power, the winds and the Whirlwind. Neither the Heathen god *Æolus*, nor the god of this World the Devil, nor the Devils of this World, VVitches and Conjurers, have any power of their own over the leaſt breath of wind, either to raiſe or lay it. *Agur* deſcribing the Excellency of God, both in himſelf and in his working, ſaith among other things (*Prov.* 30 4) *He gathereth the Wind in his Fiſt*; implying, that God hath the winds in his hand, even as a man carryeth a thing in his hand, or holdeth it in his Fiſt, keeping it there, or letting it out at pleaſure or as he liſteth. (*Pſal.* 135. 7.) *He bringeth the Wind out of his Treaſure.* We read the ſame in the Prophet (*Jer.* 10. 13. *Jer.* 51. 16.) Theſe Treaſures out of which God brings the winds, ſome call the Secrets of Nature, or ſecret natural Cauſes; but I conceive 'tis an alluſion to the Cuſtomes of men, who lay up things uſeful in private places, that they may have them at hand when occaſion calls: Chriſt teacheth us, in imitation of them, to get and keep by us ſuch Treaſuries of ſaving Truth (*Math.* 13. 52.) To be ſure, God hath the winds ready, he hath a ſtore and ſtock of them, which upon any occaſion he can bring forth.

God makes a twofold uſe of the winds, or, there are two general purpoſes, for which he brings them out of his Treaſures. Firſt, for good; Secondly, for hurt to the VVorld: Firſt, in Mercy; Secondly, in Judgment.

Firſt, God brings them forth out of his Treaſures in a way of Mercy, and for good to Mankind. And there is a ſixfold good or good uſe, for which God brings the winds out of his Treaſure.

Venti Aquilonares dicuntur ſco, & cali, quòd reddunt aerem mundum. Vatabl:

Firſt, to cleanſe and purge the Air; therefore, by ſome, the winds are called *The Brooms of Heaven* VVhen the Air is corrupt and foul, God ſweepeth it by theſe Brooms. And we find, when Judgment is threatned, a negative is put upon the wind as to this uſe, (*Jer* 4. 11.) *A dry wind of the High Places of the Wilderneſs, toward the Daughter of my people, not to fan or to cleanſe, &c.* Implying that one merciful uſe of the winds, is to fan and to cleanſe the Air, as Corn is fanned and cleanſed.

Secondly, God brings the winds out of his treaſure to temper the Air. VVhen the Air is cooled by a gentle Breize, we count it a mercy in hot ſeaſons. And ſuch is the goodneſs of God, that in thoſe places where the heat is moſt troubleſome, there are many cool Briezes. We read (*Gen.* 3. 8.) *of the cool of the day*, or

or (as the Margin hath it) *the wind of the day*, implying that the extream heat of the day is uſually aſſwaged and cooled by the wind. The Prophet (*Jer.* 14. 6.) deſcribing a time of drought, ſaith, *The wild Aſſes did ſtand in the high places, they ſnuffed up the wind like Dragons.* To ſnuffe the wind in time of drought, is a great refreſhing; wind refreſheth the body as well as food, and 'tis ſome refreſhing in famine, or want of food.

Thirdly, The wind is a *Rain-bringer.* We ſay when the wind riſeth there will be rain. Thus (1 *Kings* 18.45.) before the mighty rain which *Elijah* foretold, we read of a wind; *The Heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.* When *Eliſha* told thoſe three Kings diſtreſſed for want of water, *Ye ſhall not ſee wind, neither ſhall ye ſee rain, yet that valley ſhall be filled with water* (2 Kings 3. 17.) he thereby implyed, that wind is the ordinary fore-runner of rain. We, indeed, tranſlate (*Prov.* 25. 23.) *The North wind driveth away the rain*; yet we put in the Margine, *The North wind bringeth forth the rain.* It is true of both; the wind ſcattereth and driveth away the rain, the wind alſo bringeth rain.

Fourthly, The wind cauſeth vegetables to flouriſh. A ſweet gale of wind is not only good for man and beaſt, but for the graſs, and for the herbs, for plants and trees, the blowing of the winds maketh them flouriſh; in alluſion unto which the Church ſpeaks (*Cant.* 4. 16.) *Awake, O North wind, and come thou South, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out*; that is, that my Graces, my faith in thee, my love to thee, &c. may put forth and appear. The ſpiritual wind, the breathings of the Spirit, draw forth ſpiritual fruit from the heart, and in the life of believers, as the natural draws forth the natural fruits of the Earth.

Fifthly, The winds are beneficial and helpful for the drying up of the waters, they make the earth clean as well as the air. It is ſaid (*Gen.* 8. 1.) after the whole world was drowned, *God made a wind to paſs over the earth, and the waters aſſwaged.* The wind is a dryer as well as the Sun.

Sixthly, There is a great uſe of the winds, as to artificials. What mighty things are done by the wind? By it, Mills are turned to grind Corn and Land, and Ships are moved to carry both Men and Merchandize at Sea; there were hardly any paſſing from Nation to Nation, or diſ-joyned by water, but by the advantage or help of winds; by the help of winds Merchants bring treaſure

and precious things from one end of the earth to the other. Theſe and many more are the common benefits of the winds, for which the Lord brings them out of his treaſures.

Secondly, The winds have their evil effects, God ſends them ſometimes for a plague, or in a way of Judgment.

Firſt, Winds infect the air; the Lord can ſend, as a cleanſing, ſo a corrupting wind.

Secondly, As wind brings rain, ſo it hinders or blows away the rain.

Thirdly, The Lord ſends the wind to break and overthrow all that ſtands before it. What doth not the whirlwind overthrow? Houſes and Trees at Land are blown down; Goodly Ships at Sea, richly laden, have been ſunk and over-ſet by tempeſtuous winds. God ſent a whirlwind out of his treaſure, which cauſed the Mariners in *Jonah* to caſt their Merchandize into the Sea, and *Jonah* himſelf too. What croſs and tempeſtuous winds did the Apoſtle *Paul* meet with in his voyage to *Rome* (Acts 27.)

Further, That the Lord bringeth the winds out of his treaſure, is matter of great comfort to all that have an intereſt in the Lord; He can command the winds for them, and againſt their enemies; the wind cometh out of his Chamber, and it ſhall do as he commandeth. It is ſaid (*Nahum* 1. 3.) *The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind, and in the ſtorm, and the clouds are the duſt of his feet:* That is, he ruleth whirlwinds, he walks in and works by the whirlwind, and by ſtorms. And as we may take it properly, ſo metaphorically; that is, in the moſt tempeſtuous diſpenſations and providences, when the world is, as it were, in an Hericane, as boyſterous winds in ſome places are called. In the greateſt concuſſions and confuſions, whether of things or perſons, the Lord carrieth on his work in a regular courſe. As the great toſſings of the air by natural winds, ſo the greateſt toſſings of affairs by the ſtrong and various paſſions of mens ſpirits in the world (which we may call civill winds, yea whirlwinds) are under the ordering of divine power and wiſdome. The Prophet (*Iſa.* 17. 13.) admoniſheth the wicked to take heed and give glory to God: *For* (ſaith he) *the Nations ſhall ruſh like the ruſhing of many waters; But God ſhall rebuke them, and they ſhall flee far off, and ſhall be chaſed as the chaffe of the mountaines before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. A rolling thing*

thing is unſteadfaſt at all times, and a whirlwind will make that roul and tumble which is very ſteadfaſt; it maketh Trees to ſhake, it maketh ſtrong Towers tremble: Now if the whirlwind cauſeth things that are fixed and ſtrong to ſhake and move, what will it do to thoſe that are light and unfixed, *rolling things!* That which is (as men judge) fixt and ſteady as a Rock, *ſhall be as a rolling thing before the whirlwind* of the Lords diſpleaſure. The Margin of our Bibles calls this *rolling thing*, *Thiſtle-down*. We know what the down of a Thiſtle is, which at ſome ſeaſons of the year falls off, and is the lighteſt thing imaginable. When there is not a breath of wind ſtirring, the Thiſtle-down will ſtir, roll, and move from place to place; what then, think you, will become of Thiſtle-down before a mighty wind, a whirlwind? The wicked ſhall be as Thiſtle-down before the whirlwind; but the people of God need not fear, for (as 'tis ſaid of the Sea, ſo of the wind) *his way is in it*, he rules the proper, and he rules the metaphorical whirlwinds, which toſs and tumble the ſtate and affaires of this world. To cloſe this matter,

We may take notice of ſeveral wonderfull things in and about the wind; and becauſe *Elihu* ranks this among the great works of God, who *doth marvellous things which we comprehend not*, not only in Thunder and Lightning, in Snow and Rain, but in the winds, therefore I will reckon up ſeven wonders which peculiarly concern the winds.

Firſt, This is conſiderable, That there is ſcarce any Country but breeds ſome wind or other, which blows moſt there, and exerciſeth a peculiar force upon it; theſe are called *Provincial Winds*. The North-weſt wind (ſaith *Plinie*) is proper to the *Athenians*, other parts of *Greece* having little acquaintance with it. The North-eaſt wind afflicts *Calabria*. And that ſeveral other winds, are congenial to other Countries, whereof ſome are benigne and favourable, others vexatious and uncomfortable to them, may be ſeen in the Authors quoted in the Margin.

Secondly, 'Tis a wonder that the ſame wind in one Country cauſeth fair weather, in another rain and ſtorms.

Thirdly, That the ſame wind is in one place very healthy, and in another cauſeth ſickneſs by corrupting the air, and ſo the blood and ſpirits of men. A learned Author ſaith, when-*ever the South wind bloweth in ſuch a Country or City, the people fall ſick.*

Fourthly,

Nulli propemodum regio eſt, quæ aliquem ventum ex ſe Naſcentem, & circa ſe cadentem non habeat. Sen: *l.* 5. Natur: queſt. *c.* 17. Plin: *l.* 2. *cap.* 47. *In inſula Lesbo Oppidum Mytilene magnifice ædificatum eſt, ſed imprudenter poſitum, quod mœnes civitate cum Aquilone flat, homines ægrotant.* Vitru: *l.* 1. *c.* 5.

Fourthly, That's alſo obſervable, that ſome winds are hot and dry, others cold and moyſt, according to the temperature of the places from whence they come, and thorough which they paſſe to us.

Fifthly, 'Tis marveilous that in ſome parts of the world, the wind blows conſtantly one way; ſuch are called *trade windes*. Expert Sea-men know where to fetch a wind, when once they get to ſuch a poynt they never miſs it. The *Eteſian* winds are famouſly known in Hiſtory, blowing out of the Eaſt or North-eaſt yearly at one time, for the ſpace of forty dayes together; theſe *Cicero* called *Anniverſary winds*.

Sixthly, Yet in moſt places nothing is more unconſtant than the wind; inconſtancy it ſelf is Embleamed by the winds. No man knoweth when or where to have them certain for an houre; Hence we ſay, *Take the Wind while it ſerveth. Wind and tyde tarry for no man.*

Seventhly, That's alſo wonderfull, That winds blow at once from contrary poynts, North and South, &c. at the ſame time. *Daniel* (Chap. 7. 2.) ſaw in a viſion the *four Winds ſtriving together upon the Sea*; All the winds were let looſe together, contending (as it were) for victory. Naturaliſts diſpute and queſtion whether contrary winds can blow at once; *Ariſtotle*, the great Philoſopher, affirmes they cannot, becauſe (ſaith he) the one muſt needs beat back the other. That's true; yet, what hinders but that for a time there may be ſuch a conflict or battel fought between them, as may extreamly trouble both the air and waters, and ſhake vehemently ſuch things as ſtand in their way on earth? The Natural Hiſtorian reports, That two conſiderable Cities in the *Corinthian Bay*, were ſuddenly ſwallowed up by the Sea, which inundation was cauſed by the fierce blowing of the North and South wind at one and the ſame time. *Out of the South cometh the whirlwind,*

Ariſt: *l.* 2. Met: *c.* 6.

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ממזרים זרה

A radice eventitare diſpergere. Per ventos diſpergentes intelliguntur venti aquilonares, qui diſpergunt nubes, et aerem ventilant.

And cold out of the North.

The Hebrew is out of the *ſcattering* or *fanning Winds cometh cold*; Mr *Broughton* renders, *And cold from the faire weather-Winds*. Our tranſlation determines it.

Cold

Cold out of the North.

Boreas ἀιθρηγενέτης dicitur quia gignit ἀιθρίαν ſerenitatem. Honier; Odyſſe.

Common experience teacheth us, that the Northern coaſts are cold, yea the coldeſt coaſts: The coldeſt freezing winds come out of the North, as the ſtrongeſt out of the South. Here is North and South, and here are the ſeveral effects of them; the South breaths warmth, and the North cold.

Hence Note;
Cold comes at Gods call.

Now the South wind bloweth, and then 'tis warme, anon the North wind blows, and then 'tis cold. God hath his ſpecial ſtore-houſes for heat and cold, he brings cold out of his Northern ſtore-houſe, and not only heat but whirlwinds out of his ſtore-houſe in the South. Cold is diſpoſed of by God as heat is, ſomtimes for the good, ſomtimes for the hurt of the creature. Cold is both needfull and hurtfull; cold is needfull to the body of man, and cold is needfull to the body of the earth; therefore God hath that in his treaſure to ſerve the uſes of man with. Changes from heat to cold, ſet forth, Firſt, Gods power; Secondly, His care: If the air were kept alwayes at one rate, or in the ſame temper, neither windy nor ſtormy, neither very hot nor very cold, we poſſibly would like it better, but it would be worſe for us. Changes in the air are ſo uſefull, that nature could not be well preſerved without them; we would have all things alike, we would have it alwayes warme weather, alwayes faire, but God ſeeth 'tis beſt for us, there ſhould be changes in natural things for our natural good. It is alſo beſt for our ſpiritual good to have providential changes. God ſeeth it needfull to leave us ſomtimes under clouds and darkneſs, to bring cold as well as heat out of his treaſures, to ſend us chilling times as well as ſpringing times; cold is as good for our inner man as heat, ſtormes as calmes, foule weather as faire. *Now for a ſeaſon* (ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 1. 6.) *if need be ye are in heavineſs through manifold temptations.* The coldneſs of the air kills the weeds in our grounds, ſo doth the cold of affliction and tribulation the weeds of corruption in our ſouls. Seaſonable cold makes trees and plants more fruitfull in their ſeaſons: The cold nipping froſts of affliction, diſpoſe our ſouls (through the bleſſing of God) to a gracious fruitfulneſs in every good word

Frigora tempeſtiva arborum et plantarum conferunt fœcunditati. Garc: Meteor:

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Hence Note;
Cold comes at Gods call.

Now the South wind bloweth, and then 'tis warme, anon the North wind blows, and then 'tis cold. God hath his ſpecial ſtore-houſes for heat and cold, he brings cold out of his Northern ſtore-houſe, and not only heat but whirlwinds out of his ſtore-houſe in the South. Cold is diſpoſed of by God as heat is, ſomtimes for the good, ſomtimes for the hurt of the creature. Cold is both needfull and hurtfull; cold is needfull to the body of man, and cold is needfull to the body of the earth; therefore God hath that in his treaſure to ſerve the uſes of man with. Changes from heat to cold, ſet forth, Firſt, Gods power; Secondly, His care: If the air were kept alwayes at one rate, or in the ſame temper, neither windy nor ſtormy, neither very hot nor very cold, we poſſibly would like it better, but it would be worſe for us. Changes in the air are ſo uſefull, that nature could not be well preſerved without them; we would have all things alike, we would have it alwayes warme weather, alwayes faire, but God ſeeth 'tis beſt for us, there ſhould be changes in natural things for our natural good. It is alſo beſt for our ſpiritual good to have providential changes. God ſeeth it needfull to leave us ſomtimes under clouds and darkneſs, to bring cold as well as heat out of his treaſures, to ſend us chilling times as well as ſpringing times; cold is as good for our inner man as heat, ſtormes as calmes, foule weather as faire. *Now for a ſeaſon* (ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 1. 6.) *if need be ye are in heavineſs through manifold temptations.* The coldneſs of the air kills the weeds in our grounds, ſo doth the cold of affliction and tribulation the weeds of corruption in our ſouls. Seaſonable cold makes trees and plants more fruitfull in their ſeaſons: The cold nipping froſts of affliction, diſpoſe our ſouls (through the bleſſing of God) to a gracious fruitfulneſs in every good word

Frigora tempeſtiva arborum et plantarum conferunt fœcunditati. Garc: Meteor:

and

and work. We would alwayes have it ſpring and Sun-ſhine, peace and ſafety, but God knows it muſt be otherwiſe; perpetual ſhining and faire ſeaſons are reſerved for Heaven. While we are on Earth the cold of adverſity is as advantagious to our ſpiritual condition, as the coldneſs of the air is to our natural. *Out of the South cometh the whirlwind, and cold out of the North.*

Verſ. 10th. *By the breath of God froſt is given, and the breadth of the waters is ſtraitened.*

In the former part of this verſe, we have the ſupream cauſe of froſt, and in the latter an effect of it. *By the breath of the Lord froſt is given*, or, *he giveth froſt by his breath.* The Hebrew is active, we tranſlate paſſively.

By the breath of the Lord.

Flante deo, i.e. deo ipſum flatum cauſante.

That is, God breathing or blowing; not that the Lord uſeth breathing or blowing properly, he is a Spirit: But the Lord is ſaid to breath or blow when he commands the wind to blow or breath. The winds are called Gods breath, or ſpirit. Some of the Hebrew Doctors, underſtand nothing elſe but his bare will and command, or the intimation of his mind to have it ſo; but I rather take it for the froſt-making winds which are ſent by God. *By the breath of the Lord*, that is, when the Lord appoynts and orders cold winds to come out of his treaſure, when the Lord gives out the word of command, cold winds iſſue forth, and then froſt appears. *David* affirmes in general, (*Pſal.* 33. 6.) *By the word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the Hoſt of them by the breath of his mouth.* The Heavens and their Hoſts, all the powers and vertues of them, all the influences and efficacies of them are given out by the breath of the Lord. And among other things that are given *by the breath of the Lord*

A verbo dei dat Gelu. Chald: pro a voluntate dei dat gelu, ſc: Arcturus.

Froſt is given.

Froſt is cold in exceſs, froſt is great cold; every cold is not freezing cold. The word which we render *froſt*, is often rendred *ice*, and it cometh from a root which ſignifieth *to make bald* becauſe froſt and ice cover the graſſe (which is to the ground as haire to the head of man) and ſo make the ſurface of the Earth ſmooth like a bald head. Froſt alſo makes the ſurface of the Earth, not only ſmooth,

ſmooth, but bright and ſhining like a bald head. *By the breath of the Lord froſt is given.*

Hence Note;
Froſt is the gift or diſpenſation of God.

Changes in the air, as well as changes in the eſtates, lives, or hearts of men, are from the Lord (*Pſal.* 147. 17.) *He giveth ſnow like wooll: he ſcattereth the hoar froſt like aſhes: He caſteth forth his ice like morſels; who can ſtand before his cold?* It is Gods ice and his cold as well as his rain or his Sun-ſhine. When the Pſalmiſt ſaith, *He ſcattereth the froſt, he caſteth forth his ice*, he ſaith the ſame thing in ſubſtance which *Elihu* doth here, *By the breath of the Lord froſt is given*: There is a continuall dependance of all creatures in their motions and operations, as well as in their beings, upon the will of God, 'tis by his word that froſt is given. Some deny the working of the firſt cauſe with the ſecond cauſes, any otherwiſe than as God once gave them a working power, and conſerveth that power once given them. Whereas indeed God hath not only given a general power to the creature, not only hath he ſaid, *There ſhall be froſt ſomtimes, and heat ſomtimes, and fair weather ſomtimes*, but when-over the heat or cold or froſt come, they come by a particular order from him. As all things, men eſpecially, have their being in him, ſo their working and moving from him; and that not only becauſe he makes us in general, working, moving creatures, but as to every ſpecial work and motion. This the Prophet aſſerts, while he puts thoſe reproving queſtions (*Iſa.* 10. 15.) *Shall the axe boaſt it ſelf againſt him that heweth therewith? or ſhall the ſaw magnifie it ſelf againſt him that ſhaketh it? as if the rod ſhould ſhake it ſelf againſt them that lift it up, or as if the ſtaffe ſhould lift up it ſelf, as if it were no wood.* Living and natural creatures move no more without God, than artificial and liveleſs inſtruments (ſuch as the axe and ſaw, the rod and ſtaff) can move themſelves without the hand or help of man. *By the breath of the Lord froſt is given,*

And the breath of the water is ſtraitned.

This is an effect of the former. Froſt drinks up the waters, and ſo ſtraitens them: ſome define ice, which is made by the froſt, *to be ſtore of water in a little room, or narrow compaſſe.* Every years experi-

Glacies eſt copia aquæ in anguſto.

experience tells us, that the waters are pinched with the froſt. Waters which were out before a froſt, are fetcht in or contracted by the froſt; hence 'tis ſaid (*Chap.* 38. 30.) *The waters are hid as with a ſtone*, which is of the ſame ſence with this expreſſion, *The breadth of the water is ſtraitned*; God brings the waters into their old bounds, or into narrower bounds than before, by froſt. From this effect of froſt, that the breadth of the water is ſtraitned by it,

Note;
Cold is a ſtraitner.

'Tis ſo in natural things, 'tis ſo alſo (to mind the reader of that occaſion'd this note) in ſpirituals and morals. Take coldneſs as it is an ill diſpoſition, or an indiſpoſition upon the heart, it ſtraitens us, as to the doing of any good; for, as Chriſt hath foretold us (*Mat.* 24. 12.) that *becauſe iniquity ſhall abound* (in the latter dayes) *the love of many ſhall wax cold*: So when-ever love or zeal, or any grace in us waxeth cold, piety, in all the acts or whole compaſſe of it, will certainly decline and be ſtraitned. He that before had a large heart, becomes narrow-hearted, and is pinched in his ſpirit by this ſinful coldneſſe. Warmth enlargeth, Cold ſtraiteneth. God ſends the cold of afflictions upon many bad men, to ſtraiten their Luſts, elſe they would keep no bounds, they would overflow all; and it is the great deſign of Satan to ſend a cold upon, or to frieze the ſpirits of all good men, that they may be ſtraitened and made unfit for the ſervice of God. Take heed of a coldneſs in your diſpoſition, for that will be a ſtraitner of your graces; but welcome the froſt of affliction, that may be a ſtraitner of your corruptions. There is nothing we ſhould fear more (except the loſs of them, and the favour of God with them) than to feel our graces ſtraitened; nor is there any thing (except the favour of God) which we ſhould more deſire, than to feel our luſts and corruptions weakned and abated.

Et rurſum latiſſime funduntur aquæ. Vulg *Ego conſenſerim illis qui participium* מוצק

Some render this latter part of the verſe not as we, *The breadth of the waters is ſtraitned*; but, *The waters are diſſolved into their breadth.* As if *Elihu* had ſaid, the ice or froſt being diſſolved, the waters return to their wonted latitude. The word rendred *ſtraitened*, may be derived from a root which ſignifieth to *diſſolve*, to melt and pour out. Thus, as according to our tranſlation, we take the

the latter part of the verſe as an effect of the firſt, froſt being that whereby the breadth of the waters is ſtraitned; ſo according to this tranſlation, it ſtands in oppoſition to the former, *By the breath of the Lord froſt is given, and he again* (by his breath) *diſſolveth the water.* Thawing as well as freezing is from God. Thawing is the melting of the ice; as mettal is melted in the fire, ſo ice is melted by the heat of the Sun. Thus the North makes ice, and the South unmakes or melts it. The power of God is to be ſeen in diſſolving thoſe huge rocks and mountains of ice into water, as well as in congealing thoſe mighty floods of water into icy rocks. *David* celebrateth the power of God in this alſo (*Pſal.* 147. 18.) *He ſendeth out his word, and melteth them* (that is, the morſels of ice ſpoken of *verſ.* 17.) *He cauſeth the wind* (a warm thawing wind) *to blow, and the waters flow*, that is, thoſe waters which were bound up by the cold, flow away by heat. Some inſiſt much upon this tranſlation. It is of the Lord that the waters are enlarged or ſtraitned, frozen or diſſolved. I leave it with the Reader, which to pitch upon (both are ſafe and honourable to God) and proceed to the next verſe.

non arctum ve angustum, ſed fuſum aut ſolutum potius reddunt. Sic aquiloni facultatem efficiendi gelu, Auſtro liquandi & fundendi attribuit. Bold.

Verſ. 11. *Alſo by watering he wearieth the thick cloud, he ſcattereth his bright cloud.*

Vox ברי *compoſita eſt præpoſitione* ב *& nomine* רי *quo ſignificatur irrigatio, a verbo* רוה *irrigare.* Piſc.

There is a four-fold reading or expoſition of the former part of this verſe; *By watering he wearieth the thick cloud.*

First, thus, *For watering*, or, *that he may water the earth, he wearieth the thick cloud*, that is, he calleth up ſo much vapour as burdens or wearieth the thick Cloud, that he may have ſufficient for the watering of the earth by rain. God cauſeth his vapour to aſcend, ſaith the Prophet (*Jer.* 10. 13.) that is, he draws up much water by vapors, as the matter of clouds, or as the matter out of which clouds are made, and he fills the cloud ſo full of water, that it can ſcarce bear the weight; and all this he doth for the plentiful watering of the earth.

Cum tempus irrigandi terram eſt cogit & condenſat nubes illaſque magna aquarum copia gravidas efficit. Inde apud Hometum. νεφεληγερέτα ζεύς, i. e. *nubium congregatur Jupiter.* Bold.

Secondly thus, *He cauſeth the cloud to give out, or ſpend its water till it be weary.* We ſay of any thing that is ſpent to the laſt, it is tired and wearied. Thus the Lord by watering wearies the thick cloud, commanding the clouds to pour rain upon the earth, till they are tired, till they have ſpent all their ſtore, and cannot yeeld

Mercerus.

yeeld a drop more. Yet becauſe to water the earth is the moſt proper and naturall buſineſs of the cloud, therefore,

Thirdly, A learned Expoſitor conceives, that the cloud is not wearied by watering or raining upon the earth; but that on the contrary the cloud is ſaid to be wearied or troubled, when, while it is about that work, it is ſcattered or diſperſed by the Sun or Wind.

Fourthly, Others refer this wearying of the cloud, to the command which it receives for the watering of very remote parts of the earth. The Lord ſaith to this or that cloud, remove far off, go and water ſuch a Countrey (it may be a hundred, yea, many hundred miles off the place from whence the vapours were exhaled) and there diſburden thy ſelf, or fall down in ſhowres. When the Lord ſends the cloud a long journey, we may ſay, 'tis even wearied, as a man or beaſt is that hath gone a long journey.

Frumentum deſiderat nubes. Vulg. *Cibum arborum imber eſt.* Plin. l. 17. cap. 2.

I ſhall not trouble the reader with that wide interpretation of the Latine tranſlator, rendring thus, *The cloud deſires corn*, or *the cloud labours for corn*, that is, to make the earth fruitful, and bring forth abundance of corn. Some of the Ancients have taught that there is a kind of natural marriage, between the earth and the clouds, or between the clouds and the corn, or any other fruits of the earth. Rain is the food of the earth, that is, of Fruits and Plants; to which the Prophet (*Hoſ.* 2. 22.) makes an elegant alluſion. But I paſs this.

The ſecond interpretation I judge moſt congruous to the ſcope of the text, which ſaith clearly, *Alſo by watering he wearieth the thick cloud.*

Whence note;

Theſe creatures which have greateſt ſtores to give, may quickly have none left to give.

Here is a cloud and a thick cloud (*Elihu* doth not ſpeak of an ordinary, but of a thick cloud) yet upon the Lords command to give ſhowres the cloud is quite ſpent and wearied. Though men have the greateſt affluence, the largeſt ſtores and ſtock, of wealth or riches, yea of gifts and graces, yet they may be wearied, and even drawn dry. The thickeſt clouds, that is, they who have the greateſt treaſures of ſtrength, of wit, of learning and knowledge, are ſoon wearied, exhauſted and emptied, unleſs they live in dependance upon God; *Only, God himſelf can never be wearied by watering.* How much ſoever God giveth out to us, he is not at all emptied, but remaines everlaſtingly equally full. And if God will ſpeak to the meaneſt creature, even to that which ſeemeth moſt empty, it ſhall water others and not be wearied. The thick clouds, they who have much, may be ſpent, while he that hath but a little ſhall not be ſpent. The Prophet ſaid to the poor woman (1 *King.* 17. 14.) *The oyl in the cruſe, and the meal in the barrel ſhall not waſte.* The woman might draw out of the oyl as long as ſhe would, and ſtill there would be a ſupply of oyl, nor would the barrel be weary in yeelding meal. The Lord can make the creature unwearied, and eſtabliſh it to us for good. A full cloud will ſoon drop away, if the Lord forbear ſupplies; and a few drops ſhall be as an everlaſting ſpring where the Lord gives out ſupplies. We may alſo allude to that (2 *King.* 4. 2.) There was a poor widow, and the creditors were ready to ſeize her two ſons for bondmen, and, ſaith ſhe, I have nothing but a little pot of oyl, and what will that do towards payment? Well, ſaith the Prophet, *Go borrow thee veſſels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty veſſels, borrow not a few*, and thou ſhalt draw out of the pot, and the pot of oyl ſhall not be wearied by giving oyl into the veſſels. God ſpeaking to the pot of oyl it yeelded a continued ſupply; the oyl never ceaſed till the woman had not a veſſel to receive it. If God ſaith to the leaſt pittance of temporals, which a man hath in this world, hold out, it ſhall not fail nor be weary; 'tis ſo likewiſe in ſpirituals, the Lord can make a little grace hold out, the thinneſt cloud ſhall not be wearied by watering.

Again, *By watering he wearieth the thick cloud*, that is, God giveth out ſhowres to water the earth abundantly.

Hence note;

God is very free and liberal;

He will empty the thick cloud upon the earth to make it fruitful; He gives not only a few drops, but abundance; and this is moſt true in ſpirituals. How doth the Lord ſhowre down and empty even whole clouds of good things upon the ſoul! as he hath promiſed, ſo he once did, and ſtill doth ſometimes (and will more in the laſt times) *poure out the Spirit*, which is an alluſion to theſe ſhowres of rain powred from the clouds: And as the Lord powres

powres out his Spirit, which can never be wearied or drawn dry; so the Lord makes use of many thick clouds (which hold much spiritual rain) even to weariness, for the refreshing of wearied souls; I mean such Ministers as he hath furnished with great gifts and graces, such as are not (as the Apostle *Jude* compareth some Teachers) *Clouds without water*, but (as true and faithful Teachers should be) full of water. The waterings of any *Apollo* are at the Lords disposure: He saith, drop thy word here, drop thy word there, and thou shalt not drop thy word any more here or there. The Lord hath often been so bountiful to Nations and Churches, that he hath even wearied many thick clouds to water them with the rain of his word. That of the Psalmist (though it be true of the rain properly taken, falling upon the earth) is most true of spiritual rain falling upon the Churches (*Psal.* 65.10.) *Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly, thou settlest the furrows thereof.* And so is that also to be understood (*Psal.* 68. 9.) *Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain* (or *rain of liberalities*) *whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance when it was weary.* Thou didst even weary the thick cloud, to confirm, that is, to refresh thy weary people.

And seeing they who carry and dispence the Word are in Scripture emblematically expressed by Clouds (*Isa.* 60.8. *Who are these that flee as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?* The Preachers of the Gospel come as so many clouds, and the Prophet tells us, the Word cometh *down as rain and snow from heaven* (*Isa.* 55. 10.) which supposeth a cloud from whence it cometh; for, saith the Lord, *So shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth, it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please*; Seeing, I say, the dispensers of the Word are compared to clouds) let them that sit under the droppings of these clouds take heed they be not unfruitful, or like that ground which drinketh in the rain, yet beareth nothing but briars and thorns, whose end is to be burned. God hath wearied and quite spent many of these thick clouds by continual dropping upon, and watering the souls of men, yet how barren, how fruitless are they! If but one of the clouds of heaven be wearied in watering the earth, we soon after discern the face of the earth refreshed and renewed by it. And shall God weary those heavenly clouds by watering men on earth, and men remain unrefreshed, unrenewed! Clouds of sorrow and darkness

darkness will at last weary all those with their waterings and droppings upon them, who, when God hath wearied his Clouds by watering them with the word of life from Heaven, yet remaine altogether barren and unfruitfull. *By watering he wearieth the thick Cloud.*

He scattereth his bright Cloud:

The former part of the verse spake of *a thick Cloud*, this latter speaks of *a bright Cloud*: The Hebrew is, *The Cloud of his light*; which I conceive is here added; First, to shew that Clouds of all sorts serve the purposes of God; the thick Cloud, and the bright Cloud, the dark Cloud, and the light Cloud, are made use of by him. And as he doth weary the Cloud, that is full of water, so he scattereth the Cloud that is full of light, or, *he scattereth his bright Cloud.*

Nubes ex cujus dissipatione lucem restituit. Hanc appellat nubem lucis dei, qua dispulsa lux et serenitas inducitur. Merc.

Yet some considering it is not said in the letter of the Text, *A light Cloud*, but *a Cloud of light*, understand by *a Cloud of light*, such a Cloud as hides and hinders the light, and which being scattered, light and faire weather succeed. Yet rather as before. But why is it here said, that *he scattereth his bright Cloud*? possibly, because he hath no use of his bright Cloud, but of his thick Cloud only, when he would water the earth. And indeed Clouds which are only bright, or which have much light, but no water, are of little use. Some have much light of knowledge, but no water of instruction to drop upon others; such Clouds God disperseth and scatters. It is not an outward faire appearance, which can bring us into acceptance with God, *The bright Cloud shall be scattered*, if it have no rain in it, to water the earth.

Nubem lucis, *non dicit lucidam, sed quæ lucem abscondit.* Coc.

Againe, Some translate, *His light scattereth the Cloud.* So the text may be read according to the letter of the Hebrew; as if the meaning were this, God by the Sun-beams dispels or disperseth the Cloud; for Clouds are scattered sometimes by the wind, sometimes by the Sun. That which gathered the Cloud, may also scatter it. The Sun draweth up the vapours, of which Clouds are formed or compacted, and soone after the Sun dissolveth the Clouds, which it had gathered. The same power makes and unmakes the Cloud, gives it a body, and takes it away; *His light scattereth the Cloud.* That's a truth also; For as brightnesse or light is scattered among the Clouds, and makes the Clouds appeare bright,

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bright, so brightness or light scatters Clouds, or causeth them to disappeare.

Elihu having thus discoursed of wind and cold, of freezing and thawing, of working some Clouds to weariness, and of scattering others, proceeds in the two following verses, to shew the special uses which the Lord makes of all those motions in the air, and impressions upon the Earth, with the Inhabitants of it, whether in a way of Judgment or of Mercy.

JOB, Chap. 37. Vers. 12, 13.

12. *And it is turned about by his counsel: that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth.*

13. *He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.*

IN the former verse *Elihu* spake of the Clouds, of the thick Cloud wearied with watering, and of the bright Cloud, scattered by the Wind or Sun. In these two verses he further sets down two things more generally concerning the Clouds.

First, He shews whence the motion of the Cloud is, and by what or whom directed; *It is turned about by his counsel*, in the beginning of the 12th verse, and *he causeth it to come*, at the beginning of the 13th verse. There we have the Spring of the Clouds motion.

Secondly, *Elihu* shews the purpose, or the design of the Lord in turning about the Clouds by his counsel; which design is laid down two wayes.

First, In general, *That they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth*; that's the first purpose of God in moving the Clouds, they are to execute his Commands; and that's his general purpose.

Secondly, We have his special purposes or designs laid down in the close of the 13th verse, and they are three-fold. *He turneth about the Cloud, and causeth it to come,*

First,

First, For Correction.
Secondly, For his Land.
Thirdly, For Mercy.

He causeth it to come (saith *Elihu*) *whether for Correction, for his Land, or for Mercy*; all these purposes and designs God hath in moving and ordering these vast and mighty bodies of the Clouds, which hang like Mountains in the air. Thus you have the parts of these words, with their scope and tendency. More distinctly.

Vers. 12. *And it is turned about by his counsel.*

First, Vapours are raised and condensed into Clouds by the counsel of God, he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth, (*Psal.* 135. 7.) Which vapours (as was shewed before) are the material cause or matter of the Clouds.

Secondly, As by the counsel of God the vapours are raised, of which Clouds are made; so this Text tells us, that by his counsel the Clouds are moved, and order'd in their motion; which motion of the Clouds is very various; sometimes one way, sometimes another, sometimes forward, sometimes backward, or retrograde; sometimes their motion is circular, as the word here used by *Elihu* seemeth to imply, *It is turned or whirled about*; according to that of *Solomon* (Eccl: 1. 6.) *The wind goeth toward the South, and turneth about unto the North; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his Circuit.* We have here three words expressing the motion of the wind; First, it goeth; Secondly, whirleth about; Thirdly, returneth again; and all this according to its circuits. It is said of *Samuel* (1 *Sam.* 7. 16.) *He went from year to year in circuit, to Bethel and Gilgal, and Mizpet, and judged Israel in all those places.* Thus the winds according to the Commission they receive from God, ride every year in circuit, now they are in one quarter, and anon in another, and whersoever they come they may be said to do judgment in a way of favour to some, and in a way of displeasure unto others. The winds hath his Circuits, and as the Circuit of the wind is, such is the Circuit of the Clouds; the motion of the Clouds is from the wind, some say from the Starrs, but most generally, as to the natural cause, it is from the wind, which way the wind moves, that way the Clouds move. And though the motion of

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the Clouds and Winds ſeems exceeding unſteady and changeable, up and down, without any certain rule in Nature, yet they obſerve their Circuits, and run their compaſſe as God appoynts them. Mr *Broughton* renders, *And for varieties, he turneth himſelf in his wiſe Counſels for their operation, for whatſoever he Commandeth them; It is turned about* (ſay we)

By his Counſel.

It ſhould ſeem that God even calls a Councel, which way the Clouds ſhall be directed, they go by his Councel: The word in the Hebrew is a very ſignificant one (that I mean) which we render his *Counſel*, others his *skill, his art or cunning*, and there are not a few who render it, they are turned about by *his Engines*, as if God did uſe (as it were) artificial Engines to turn about thoſe mighty bodies of the Clouds; Properly the word ſignifieth *the Ropes and Tackling of a Ship*, in ordering which Ropes and Tackling the whole management of the Ship doth conſiſt. The Mariner ſhews his skill and art in ſteering his Ship a right courſe, which he doth, not only by guiding the Rudder, but by ordering the Ropes and Tackling this way and that way, to compaſſe or avoyd the wind. And the Hebrew word (*Tachbuloth*) here uſed, hath a very great nearneſs in ſound, to the Tackling of a Ship. This is a moſt elegant Metaphor, ſhewing how the Lord doth, as it were, ſteer the courſe of the Clouds, or guide the Clouds, as the Sea-man doth his Ship; his Counſels may be compared to the Tackling and the Ropes, or rather to the Helme, by which the Ship is guided; God is as the great Pilot ſitting at the Stern, and he turns theſe Clouds as his Ship, he turns them about as a Ship tacks this way and that way, to reach her Port and there unlade. The Rain, Snow, & Haile, are the Lading which theſe ſwift Ships, the Clouds, carry from place to place, to ſerve the providences of God towards man. This divine conduct of the Clouds is very admirable! the Lord knowing what parts of the Earth need thoſe Commodities, Rain, Snow, &c. which thoſe aerial Veſſels are laden with, for the enriching of the world. We render it *by his Counſel*, that is, by thoſe means which he in his Wiſdome and Counſel uſeth to turn the Clouds about, they are turned: we tranſlate the word (*Pro.* 1. 5.) *Wiſe Counſels*, and (*Pro.* 20. 18.) *Good advice*, there *Solomon* ſaith, *With good advice make warre.*

תחבולת *Propriè rei nauticæ peritia, quæ intractandis funibus potiſſimum conſiſtit, unde nominis appellatio.* Druſ: *Convertuntur artificio ipſius.* Lea: *Ipſa quoq; incircuitibus volvitur machinis ejus.* Merc: *Vertitur ſolertiis ejus.* Druſ:

And

And indeed good advice is the beſt tackling for Ships in a warre at Sea, and the beſt ammunition for a warre at Land: Councel is a noble, a notable Engine: The greateſt things on Earth are turned about by it, and ſo are thoſe great things in the air, the Clouds, *They are turned about by his Counſel,*

That they may do whatſoever he Commandeth them.

Here's the general deſign and purpoſe of God, in turning about the Clouds whitherſoever he pleaſe, it is that they may do whatſoever he Commandeth them; where we have the Clouds ſet forth,

Firſt, In their obedience, *They do the Commands of God.*

Secondly, In the univerſality of their obedience, *They do whatſoever he Commandeth.* *Elihu* compares the Clouds and Meteors to good ſervants, who are ready to do what God their Maſter requireth of them; and not only ſo, but they do his Commands every where, or whereſoever he requires them, they do all his Commands, and that in all places, as the Text ſpeaks in the next words,

Upon the face of the world in the Earth.

That is, whereſoever there is Earth, or a World, habitable or unhabitable, thither, or ſo far doth God ſend the Clouds in his ſervice, or for the executing of his will.

תבל *orbis pars terra habitabilis, Græcè οἰκουμένη.*

Further, when he ſaith, *Upon the face of the World*, his meaning is, upon the outſide or uppermoſt part of the World; and becauſe the Heavens, even the uppermoſt Heavens are a part of the world, with which the Clouds have nothing to do, their buſineſs lying here below, therefore (I conceive) *Elihu* determines it expreſly, *in the Earth.* The Clouds are not raiſed or made for the uſe and ſervice of the world above, but of the world below. *They do whatſoever he Commandeth them upon the face of the World in the Earth.*

Hence obſerve, Firſt;

The motion of the Clouds is not of themſelves, nor meerly from any natural cauſe or power, but of God;

He as it were by certain Engines and weights, turnes them about; they move not unawares, nor by the uncertain changes of

 the

the Air, but according to his direction and unchangeable purpose; *It is turned about by his Counsel.* The creatures do not govern themselves, nor are they Masters of their own motions; *The way of man is not in himself*, surely then the way of the Cloud is not in it self. Clouds take their course according to the order and command which they receive from God.

Again, The *Clouds are thus turned about by the Counsel of God, that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them.*

Hence note;

Clouds are sent about work; there's somwhat to be done by every Cloud.

God will not have a Vapour arise, nor a Cloud stir for nothing, he commands them to be doing. And if God send Clouds abroad to work, much more doth he send man forth into the world to do work, & appoints him what work to do. The first Man was no sooner made, and set up in a state of created perfection, but he was presently set to work, he must be doing (*Gen.* 2. 15.) *And the Lord God took the man* (or *Adam*) *and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress and to till it.* From the Angels in Heaven to the worms that creep upon the earth, there's no creature but hath somwhat to do; yea, not only the living and rational creatures, but (as here in the Text) the very inanimate creatures, the senseless creatures, the Clouds, have somwhat to do, God sends them forth upon his business. Every creature hath a service, hath somwhat to do: And therefore, *it will be ill with those whom God finds idle, or doing nothing, or nothing to any good purpose.* That servant had been doing, to whom Christ in the Parable is represented thus speaking at the last day, *Well done good and faithful Servant.*

Thirdly observe;

The Clouds are faithful and ready Servants, they do whatsoever the Lord commands them.

They are Gods Messengers, and they will do any or every Errand, which he sends them about, and trusts them with. 'Tis the duty and commendation of a Servant, to do whatsoever he is commanded. A mans servant must do all his Masters just and lawful commands; he must not take up this or that command to do it, and

and pass by the rest. The Rule is plain (*Col.* 3. 22.) *Servants obey your Masters in all things*: Much more must a Servant of God obey him in all things. (*Acts* 13. 22.) *I have found David a man after mine own heart; he shall fulfill all my Will. David* was a trusty servant; he was not like *Saul*, who did the Lords work to halves. The Clouds are trusty Servants, they do whatsoever God commands them; and we may distribute the commands which God gives the Clouds, into two Ranks.

First, The command of God to the Clouds is sometimes for the hurt or punishment of man. God threatens and he executes vengeance by the Clouds (*Ezek.* 13. 13.) Winds conveigh the Clouds, and the Clouds pour down overflowing showrs in the anger of God, and great hail-stones in his fury, to consume and ruine all before them.

Secondly, Clouds execute the command of God in a way of favour; as they execute his threatnings, so they fulfil his promises (*Hos.* 2. 21, 22.) Both these commands to the Clouds are expressly mentioned in the next verse, I only touch them here.

Now forasmuch as the Clouds are here described under the notion of the prest and faithful Servants of God, doing whatsoever he commands, take these Inferences from it.

First, If Clouds do whatsoever God commands them, then surely Christians ought to do whatsoever Christ commands them: Shall the Clouds of God out-do the children of God in obedience? We find that admonition often urged in the Scripture of the New Testament, especially in the 13th of *Mathew*, and in the 1st 2d and 3d Chapters of the *Revelation*, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.* But behold a wonder, they that have no ears hear! The Clouds have no ears, and yet they hear, and more than hear, they do the commands of God. What shall we say, when Clouds hear and obey, and men do neither? Let us learn Duty from the Clouds. We are sent to the School of Nature in holy Scripture, almost throughout. *Elihu* seems to say, *Go to the Clouds, O ye that are either slothful or disobedient, consider their work and be wise; they are continually doing whatsoever the Lord commands them.*

Secondly, If the Clouds do whatsoever God commands them, then here's matter of comfort to all who do what God commands them; surely God will not command the Clouds to do them any hurt

hurt who are doing his commands. If you can ſay that you do the commands of God, you may reſt aſſured God will never give the Clouds a command to do you hurt. I do not ſay but an affliction may drop out of the Clouds upon a man that is doing the commands of God; or, the Clouds may have a command to drop affliction upon him that is doing the commands of God: but the Clouds drop no hurt upon any that do the commands of God. And therefore ſeeing the Clouds, even thoſe Clouds that carry Storms and Tempeſts, Thunder and Lightning, Snow, Hail, and Rain, the great Rain of his ſtrength, ſeeing I ſay, theſe Clouds, that are the Treaſuries and Magazines of ſuch terrible things, are at the command of God, let not his faithful people fear; for when the Winds are Stormy, when the Clouds are black, and carry, as we think, nothing but wrath and death in them, God will take care of them, and charge his Clouds to do them no harm. Clouds, whatſoever they are doing, are doing Gods commands, and doubtleſs he will not give them any commands for their hurt who keep and do his commands.

And as 'tis matter of comfort to the faithful Servants of God, that he commandeth the Clouds in the Air, ſo that he alſo commands thoſe Clouds which are raiſed in the hearts of men, or that ſit and appear in their faces and foreheads. We often ſee Clouds gather in the Brows of diſpleaſed mortals. As ſome are clouded with ſorrow, ſo others are clouded with anger and wrath. Thoſe black Clouds in the faces of men are as dreadful as the blackeſt Clouds in the Air; yet the Lord who commands the Clouds in the Air, commands the Clouds of anger and choler, of wrath and indignation, riſing out of the hearts, and appearing in the faces of men, and can blow them over, or blot them out, whenſoever he pleaſeth.

Thirdly, If the Lord by his commands orders the Clouds, and the Clouds are ready to execute his commands, then let us have high thoughts of the power of God, and of his commands. If men refuſe the commands of God, if the ſtout and hard hearts of men will not ſtoop to them, the Clouds of Heaven, yea, the clods of the earth will. Whatſoever God commands, he will have it done; not one title, not one *Iota* (as Chriſt ſpake of the Law) ſhall fall ſhort, or fail, or be unfulfilled. If ſuch and ſuch will not, others ſhall; if *Jewes* will not, *Gentiles* ſhall; if the *Jewes* will not

not carry it like the children of *Abraham*, God can and will raiſe up children unto *Abraham* of the Stones of the ſtreet; he will not want inſtruments to anſwer his Counſels, nor to execute his commands. God will ſhake Heaven and Earth, but he will have his Will done, and his decrees perfected, yea, he will diſſolve and ruine them rather than not have his Word fulfilled. That of *David* (Pſal. 138. 2.) *Thou haſt magnified thy Word above all thy Name*, is true of the word of command, as well as of the word of promiſe. God will magnifie the word of his promiſe above all his Name, and he will alſo magnifie the word of his command above all his Name; that is, his Word is as a glaſs, wherein *his Name*, that is, his Holineſs, his Power, his Goodneſs, his Faithfulneſs, his Mercy, his Juſtice, and his Wrath, are to be ſeen, and ſhall be ſeen in the accompliſhments of it towards the children of men. Therefore fear and admire this mighty God, who will find means for the executing of his Word, for the doing of all that he hath ſpoken; *The Clouds ſhall do whatſoever he commandeth them, upon the face of the World in the earth.*

Fourthly, If the Clouds are turned about by his Counſel, if he doth, as it were, hale the Ropes to turn the Clouds which way ſoever he pleaſeth, then, *Whenſoever you ſee the Clouds gathered by the wind, remember God hath ſomwhat to do*, there's ſomwhat to be done; theſe Clouds are the Servants of God, there's ſome command or word of God or other to be fulfilled. We do not, as we ought, conſider the Counſel of God in the motion of the Clouds; yea, ſome when the Clouds gather, and the ſtorms of Wind or Rain, of Thunder and Lightning, break forth, are more ready to think of the Counſel of the Devil, than of God, they are apt to ſay, ſurely, *There's Conjuring abroad*: What's that, but the executing of the Devils Counſel? whereas we ſhould ſay, God doth it by his Counſel. Take heed of neglecting God when you ſee the Clouds; do not attribute their motion, or the moſt dreadful Storms that proceed from them, to any thing beſide the Counſel of God; for there is not the leaſt vapour can riſe out of the earth, for the making of a Cloud, but he cauſeth it to aſcend; there are not any materials gathered toward the conſtituting of a Cloud, but they are under Gods hand, he cauſeth the vapours to aſcend: and there is not the leaſt breath of wind can ſtir to move the Clouds (Clouds are moved with the wind) but as God hath appointed;

appointed; neither bad Angel, nor good, can ſtir a Cloud, but as God willeth. And therefore look to the hand and counſel of God in all theſe things, take heed of ſtaying in any work of Nature, do not aſcribe theſe impreſſions and perturbations in the Air to the power of the Devil and wicked Arts; all is of the Lord, whatſoever is done. One of the Ancients ſaid concerning the Devils, when they deſired leave to enter the Swine, *Why ſhould any of the ſheep of God be afraid of the Devil, when the Devils cannot have power over the Swine without leave from God?* The Devil cannot move a breath of wind, but according to the will of God; though he be the Prince of the Air, yet there is a Prince above him, to whoſe commands all are ſubject, both in Heaven and in Earth.

Fifthly, If it be ſo, that God commands the Clouds whenſoever they come with their ſtorms or ſhowrs, then aſcribe the praiſe of all the good you receive from the clouds to God, and be humbled under the hand of God, whenſoever you receive outward dammage from the clouds, do not ſay it is a chance.

Sixthly, Learn hence the greatneſs and the ſoveraignty of God, ſay as they did admiringly (*Math.* 8. 27.) *Who is this, that both the Winds, and Seas, and Clouds obey him!* None of the words of the Lord ſhall fall to the ground, as an Arrow or Dart that miſſeth the Mark, or as water ſpilt, that cannot be gathered up again; which latter alluſion is ſpecially intimated (1 *Sam.* 3. 12, 19.) Here in the Text *Elihu* ſets forth the Power and Soveraignty of God, having all creatures at his beck and command, as hath been ſhewed already from other paſſages in this Book, and more will occurr hereafter. The Soveraignty of God over men can never be duly acknowledged, till we acknowledge his Soveraignty over Winds and Rain, Hail and Snow, which lye in the Bowels and boſome of the clouds, and from thence are diſpenced to the earth, at the will of God.

Seventhly and laſtly, If the clouds do whatſoever God commands them, if they be ſuch faithful ſervants to God, then ſurely the clouds will one day riſe up, or come forth as witneſſes againſt all that reſiſt the commands of God: Not to obey them is bad enough, but to reſiſt them is far worſe. Chriſt would awaken the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, by telling them (*Math* 12. 41.) *The men of Nineveh ſhall riſe up in the Judgment againſt this Generation, and ſhall condemn it, becauſe they repented at the preaching of Jonah*; as alſo *the Queen of the South, becauſe ſhe came from far to hear the wiſdome of Solomon.* If Jeſus Chriſt urgeth theſe inſtances of the men of *Nineveh*, and of the Queen of the South, to terrifie that Generation for not obeying his commands, or for not receiving the Promiſes of the Goſpel; doubtleſs then in the great Day, the very clouds and winds ſhall come in as witneſſes againſt all thoſe that have reſiſted the will of God in any of his commands. Have the Clouds (will he ſay) done whatſoever I commanded them? and have you reſiſted? have you caſt my words behind your back, when the very Clouds have taken up, embrac'd, and fulfilled them? The Clouds will be a ſwift witneſs againſt all thoſe that rebel againſt the commands of God: The Snow and Rain, the Winds and Storms fulfilling his word, will bring in a caſting Evidence againſt all thoſe who have caſt his word behind their backs. All this we may read and ſee in the commanding power of God over the Clouds, and in their readineſs to obey.

Elihu proceeds.

Verſ. 13. *He cauſeth it to come, whether for Correction, or for his Land, or for Mercy.*

He, that is, *God cauſeth*, *It*, that is, *the Cloud*; *He cauſeth the Cloud to find* (in the Hebrew) to find every place and every perſon, concerning whom it hath received command and commiſſion from God. Thus the word is uſed by *Moſes* (*Numb.* 32. 23.) *If ye will not do ſo, behold, ye have ſinned againſt the Lord, and be ſure your ſin will find you out*; that is, the puniſhment of your ſin, and that Judgment which God will pour out upon you for your ſin, will find you out whereſoever ye are. In this ſence the Cloud will find us out; we render well, *He cauſeth it to come*, that is, to come to that place or perſon, to that Nation or People, to which himſelf hath appointed it: *He cauſeth it to come,*

Whether for Correction, or for his Land, or for Mercy.

Here are three ends or purpoſes of God, in communicating and commanding forth the Clouds, and we may take theſe three ends two wayes.

The firſt of theſe and the laſt concern Man more ſpecially; the ſecond concerns all other creatures, both Plants and Beaſts of the earth; it concerns all, from the Cedar in *Lebanon* to the Hyſop

sop on the wall, among the Plants, and from the Lion to the Mouse, or to the least of living or sensible creatures among the Beasts; all which God, according to his Soveraign Power, and Justice, doth either comfort or afflict as he pleaseth.

Again, The ends which God aimeth at respecting Man, are either for Correction or for Mercy.

אם־לשבט *Sive ad virgam, suæ terræ suæ misericors. Sive in disciplinam.*

First, *He causeth* the Cloud, with whatsoever is its burden, Hail, or Rain, or Snow, to unlade and disburden it self, *for correction*, The Hebrew is, *for a Rod*, so we put in the Margin. A Rod is for correction; therefore we translate for correction, for discipline. God sends the Clouds to whip or discipline a people. Further, the word signifies a Rod under a twofold Notion.

First, A Rod or a Staff to smite or strike with, in which sence it is called (*Prov.* 22. 15.) *The Rod of correction*; and at the 5th verse of the same Chapter, *The Rod of anger*; as also (*Isa.* 10. 5.) *O Assyrian, the Rod of mine anger* (saith God) Here's a Rod to smite with.

Secondly, It signifies a Rod to govern with, or to rule with; and hence this word denotes the Scepter of a Prince. The two great *Emblems of Magistracy* are *a Sword and a Scepter*. The Scepter is in the fashion of a Rod or Wand, which imports chastening and correction; and from hence it was that the chief of the Tribes of the Children of *Israel* (*Numb.* 17. 2.) were commanded *to take every one of them a Rod, according to the house of their Fathers, twelve Rods, and to write every mans Name upon his Rod, and lay them up in the Tabernacle of the Congregation, &c.* Now those Rods given in by the Princes of the Tribes, were as so many Emblems of their Power and Authority, because to the chief Magistrate the punishment of the faults and miscarriages of all under his government did belong. And hence the same word signifies a Magistratical Rod or Scepter of Government, and a Tribe or whole Family under the Rod or Scepter of a Governour, because as Rods or Branches grow from one Root, so many Tribes or Families from one Father; thus the Twelve Tribes of *Israel* sprung from *Jacob*. And that's the Reason why the Latine Translator renders this place, not as we, (*whether* for correction) but, *Whether for a Tribe*; the meaning of which reading, *Whether for a Tribe, or for his Land*, is thus given, Whether it be for one particular place, or for the whole Country or earth in general, as will

will further appear in opening those words, *For his Land*. This Translation of the Vulgar Latine, and the Interpretation given upon it, suites well with that of the Prophet (*Amos* 4. 7) where the Lord saith, *I caused it to rain upon one City, and not upon another*: Here was Rain for a Tribe, and not for his Land, not an universal Rain all the Land over; he causeth it to rain upon one City, not upon another, upon one Tribe, not upon another; that's a good sence, and the word will bear it.

Yet I rather take it here for a *Rod*, which imports chastening or correcting, as we translate, *Whether it be for Correction*. They that carryed the Rod or the Scepter, had also the power of correction in their hand, as was touch't before; and that may be one Reason why when God sent *Moses* to *Pharaoh* (*Exod.* 4. 17.) upon that great Message, the deliverance of the children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, he commanded him *to take his Rod in his hand*; which Rod held out these two things. First, that *Moses* came not as a private man to him, but like a Prince, like an Embassador from the great King, or like one whom he had appointed to take upon him the government of that people, with a Scepter in his hand. Secondly, to let *Pharaoh* know, that as God sent him with a power, or cloathed him with a Commission to treat with him, so with a power to scourge or plague him, even with ten Plagues. As if the Lord had said, O *Pharaoh*, Seest thou this Rod in the hand of my servant *Moses*; assure thy self, thou shalt have stroke upon stroke, plague upon plague, if thou wilt not let my people go. But of that by the way. *He causeth it to come for correction, or for a Rod.*

Hence note;

God can correct us by any of his Creatures.

He can make any thing a Rod; he can make nearest Relations a Rod. A Son is sometimes a Rod to his Father; how often have miscarrying and undutiful children been made a Rod of correction to their Parents? and they are usually so, when Parents have not duly corrected their children for their undutifulness and miscarriages. What are cruel men but Rods to other men? Some men have been the scourges of Mankind. *Attila*, once a great Commander in War, and King of the *Hunnes*, was called *The Rod or the Scourge of God*. And so God himself called the *Assyrian* the *Flagellum Dei.*

Rod of his anger (*Iſa.* 10. 5.) *David* called all wicked men in general the Sword of God, in his prayer for deliverance from them (*Pſal.* 17. 13, 14.) *Deliver my ſoul from the wicked, thy ſword, from men which are thy hand, O Lord (thy correcting hand,* men ordain'd *for Judgement, and eſtabliſht for Correction,* as the Prophet ſpake of the *Chaldeans*, *Hab.* 1. 12.) *Who have their portion in this life.* And as the Lord makes men, ſo the Beaſts of the earth, a Rod for the correction of Man. Thus the Lord threatned by his Prophet, *I will ſend among them, Sword, and Peſtilence, and noyſome Beaſts.*

Here in the Text we have a Rod made of a Cloud, a ſtrange kind of Rod; I'le ſend it for a Rod, it ſhall come for correction. Parents correct their children with Rods, God corrects the world with Floods; firſt, with unſeaſonable, ſecondly, with ſuperfluous Rains. O what ſevere corrections hath God laid upon the world by the Clouds! The Clouds have been terrifying, deſtroying Rods (*Exod.* 9. 18, 23.) Clouds have deſtroyed the Fruits of the earth for the ſin of Man, and taken away the hopes of the Harveſt. Rain from the Clouds hath ruined the dwellings of men, and ſpoyled both Corn and Cattel; Rain from the Clouds was that overflowing ſcourge, which deſtroyed the whole earth in the dayes of *Noah*; then God cauſed the Cloud to come, I cannot ſay for correction, but for ruine, for an univerſal ruine and devaſtation. And as God then made the Clouds a ruine to the world, ſo he often makes them a correction (1 *Sam.* 12. 18, 19. *Ezra* 10. 9.) we have had many examples, both of ſweeping Rains, and dreadful Thunders, Lightning and Tempeſt, coming forth from the Clouds.

The Apoſtle ſaith (*Rom.* 1. 18.) *The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all ungodlineſs*, &c. God hath revealed his wrath from Heaven chiefly in and by the Miniſtry of his Word; he may be ſaid alſo to reveal his wrath from Heaven againſt ſinful man in and by the Miniſtry of the Clouds; they have often lifted up their Voyce like a loud Trumpet, and louder than a Trumpet, to tell the ſons of men of their tranſgreſſion, and to reprove them for their ſin. And therefore when we ſee extraordinary gatherings of the Clouds, we ſhould take inſtruction, leſt we provoke the Lord to ſend, or cauſe them to come for correction. The Clouds drop down many good Leſſons and admonitions, and if they are not attended

attended to, the next thing they drop is a Rod or Correction; *He cauſeth it to come, whether for correction,*

Or for his Land.

Pronomen (ſua) alii ad nubem referunt, ut dicat, pro terra in qua genita fuit. Druſ.

For whoſe Land? Some refer it to the Cloud, that is, for the Land out of which the Cloud was made; for the Vapours which ariſe out of the Land by the attractive power of the Heavens make Clouds. As if the meaning were, he cauſeth the Cloud to fall down upon that Land out of which it was raiſed: whereas oftentimes a Cloud is made of Vapours raiſed from one Land or Country, and by the command of God is carryed to another Land or Country very far off.

But I rather take the Antecedent to *his* to be God himſelf; *His Land*, that is, *Gods Land*, or the Land of God. But then the Queſtion is, what are we to underſtand by *his Land*? hath God a Land diſtinct from others, as the Princes of the World have? are not all Lands his? I anſwer,

Firſt, The truth is, all the World is Gods Land; ſo that whereſoever the Clouds fall they fall upon his Land (*Pſal.* 50. 12.) *The World is mine, and the fulneſs of it*, ſaith the Lord. God is the great Land-lord of all the World.

Secondly, Somtimes in ſpecial the habitable part of the World is called the Land of God (*Pſal.* 24. 1.) there being a part of the World ſuppoſed uninhabitable, or wherein no man dwels.

Thirdly, *His Land*, that is, the Land which God doth peculiarly own (*Exod.* 19. 5.) *You are a peculiar Treaſure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine.* As the *Iſraelites* were the Lords peculiar people, ſo ſome Lands are his peculiars, he ſpecially calls them his Land, and entitles himſelf to them beyond all other Lands. The Land of *Canaan* was called *The Lords Land*, becauſe he was known and worſhipped there (*Hoſ.* 9. 3.) We may ſay in general, Look in whatſoever Country or place God is truly known, honour'd, and worſhipped, that is his Land, and that's the Land here chiefly intended (ſay ſome) by *his Land*. *He cauſeth it to come, whether for correction,*

Peculiariter terra Dei vocatur terra ſancta in qua Dei cultus exercetur. Sic nominat unamquamque gentem cui bene vult.

[redacted] *for his Land.*

That is, for the good and benefit of that Land wherein his Name is profeſſed, and himſelf truly worſhipped. That's a good ſence;

ſence; For doubtleſs the Lord takes more care of ſuch a Land, than of any other Land. The eyes of the Lord were upon the Land of *Canaan*, he took care of it from the beginning of the Year to the end thereof, even to water it with the Rain of Heaven (*Deut.* 11. 12.) Thus 'tis ſaid (*Pſal.* 68. 9, 10.) *Thou O God didſt ſend* (or ſhake out) *a plentiful Rain* (a Rain of munificences or liberalities) *whereby thou didſt confirm thine Inheritance when it was weary: Thy Congregation hath dwelt therein* Every Land to which God bears ſpecial reſpect and good-will (which whenſoever he doth, he doth it with reſpect to the people inhabiting there) may be emphatically called *His Land*. Yet,

Fourthly, Foraſmuch as the latter word *for mercy*, ſeems to imply that ſpecial favour which God beſtowes upon his own people, in ſending forth the Clouds with Rain; therefore by *His land* I rather conceive the earth in general is meant; or yet, to take it more particularly, that part of the earth which no man claims, which is ſcarce habitable by man, that which is a waſt Wilderneſs or Deſart for wild beaſts, that Land which is overgrown with Trees and Buſhes, a Land which no man dreſſeth or beſtoweth any culture or husbandry upon, even for that Land doth God take care, as his Land, thither he ſends Rain, that the Beaſts may have Paſture, and Plants moyſture, that it may be watered and provided for, as well as thoſe Lands that men by their care and induſtry manure as their own peculiars. 'Tis ſaid (Chap. 38. 26.) *He* (that is, God) *cauſeth it to rain on the earth, where no man is, on the Wilderneſs, wherein there is no man.* Thus in the Text, *He cauſeth it to come for his land*, a Land which hath no owner but himſelf.

Hence Obſerve;

God hath an univerſal reſpect to, and care over all his Creatures.

Whereſoever God hath a foot of Land in the World (though no foot of man comes there) he ſends the Clouds to do it ſervice, for the ſake only of wild Beaſts living there, and of Trees and Plants growing there. (*Pſal.* 36 6) *Lord, thou preſ[illegible] Man and Beaſt*: Not only doth God preſerve men, but h[illegible] and where no men are God provides for beaſts, that they may have food and live. We may hence argue as the Apoſtle did in another caſe,

caſe, (1 *Cor.* 9 9.) *Doth God take care for Oxen?* Hath he reſpect to the waſt Lands, to the wild Beaſts of the Wilderneſs? ſurely then he will take care of inhabited Lands, he will cauſe the Cloud to come and water the Land where men dwell, eſpecially where good men dwell; to them he cauſeth it to come (as it followeth in the Text)

For Mercy.

The third Meſſage about which the Clouds are ſent or cauſed to come, is for favour. God diſpenceth mercy by the Cloud, *he cauſeth it to come for mercy*. The Original word rendred *mercy* hath a great ſignificancy in it, this eſpecially, a bountiful good-will towards others, without reſpect to merit, or any antecedent obligation. When here 'tis ſaid *He cauſeth it to come for Mercy*, we are to underſtand much more than was meant before, when 'tis ſaid, *He cauſeth it to come for his land*, to feed the beaſts, and nouriſh the Plants; and I conceive we may give a twofold interpretation of it.

חסד *Dei propenſam omnibus benefaciendi voluntatem denotat.*

Firſt, *For Mercy*, that is, for ſome eminent uſes, beſides thoſe that are for meer neceſſity, to water the earth. Rain is ſent,

Firſt, To purge; Secondly, to cool the air; Thirdly, to cheriſh and comfort the fruits of the Earth. But beſides theſe common and ordinary ends of ſending rain, ſomewhat extraordinary ſeems to be intended, when the Text ſaith, *He cauſeth it to come for mercy*, or favour. What's the favour or ſpecial mercy that comes by rain? Surely it is the ſending of ſuch a rain and ſuch a bleſſing with it, as cauſeth the earth to bring forth abundantly. The Lord can more than ſupply wants, he can give plenty, he can give as much in one year as may ſerve for two or three. Thus he promiſed (*Levit.* 25. 21.) *Then I will Command my bleſſing upon you in the ſixth year, and it ſhall bring forth fruit for three years*; the ſixth year was the year before the *Sabbath-year*, for then they were not to till the ground; Now if you carefully obſerve my Sabbath-year (ſaith God) you ſhall have no want, though you do not ſow. This is a mercy, when God ſends in a double or treble Crop, when he not only ſends enough to ſerve the turn or to keep us alive, but abundance and plenty, ſo that *the floars ſhall be full of wheat, and the fats ſhall overflow with wine and oyle*, as the promiſe is expreſſed, *Joel* 2. 24.

Sive ad Benignitatem, *ſe. ut benigne ſiat terræ citra neceſſitatem, ut cum pluvia deſcendit ſummo æſtu ad aerem refrigerandum.* Druſ.

Hence

Hence note;

God is not only a just, but a bountifull Master;

He doth not only give us enough for necessity, but for delight and contentment; if we use his bounty well, and turn not his blessings to his dishonour, plenty will be our mercy. The Clouds come sometimes for Correction, God sweepes away even our necessaries, *by raines*, which are therefore in Scripture called *sweeping raines*; at other times the Clouds come for mercy, and empty themselves to fill us with the blessings of the earth; that, we both by corrections and favours may be led to repentance, and receive further mercy, not only mercy from the Clouds, but mercy above the Clouds. Thus the words stand in a fair opposition, and one part of the verse illustrates the other.

Yet I conceive there is somwhat further in these words, *for mercy*, or *in mercy and free benignity*; which may intimate thus much to us,

That even the Rain from the Clouds, and fruits of the earth, are not given us of desert, but of free favour and mercy.

They come for mercy, or as a mercy. God doth not feed the World because he owes them any thing, but because he is merciful; we do not oblige him to give us a drop of rain, or a morsell of bread; sweet showres from Heaven, and plentifull harvests on Earth, are acts of grace, mercy, favour, and good-will unto man. God payeth men wages in nothing but in punishment, when God punisheth, he payes wages, that which is deserv'd; if God send the Clouds for Correction, we have what our sins have procured and brought upon us; but if he send plenty, we have mercy, a gracious bounty or largess from the hand of God; our daily bread is not pay nor wages, but reward and mercy, much lesse is that which is more or beyond our daily bread. We by sin deserve that the Heavens should be (as the Lord threaten'd his ancient people in case of disobedience) as brass, and the Earth as iron; but we have not deserv'd that the Heavens should drop fatness, and the Earth yeild her increase; this is mercy. Not only are we to look upon the Pardon of sin as a mercy, and Redemption by the blood of Christ as a mercy, and Justification through his Righteousness as mercy, and eternall life as a mercy, or coming from mercy,

mercy and free grace; but we are to receive every bit of bread as coming to us through mercy, freely, and not upon any account of our own workings or deservings. And if we cannot deserve a showre, no nor a drop of rain from the Clouds, if we cannot deserve a Crop of Corn from the Earth, then surely we cannot deserve grace or peace from God, or eternal life and happiness with God.

Therefore how should we magnifie and admire the mercy and free grace of God for spiritual things, when we see such cause of magnifying him, even for temporal good things! if the Clouds are favourable to us, it is of mercy.

Further, That notion may be well improv'd, which some give of this word, reading the Abstract by the Concrete; we say, *For mercy*, they say for the *mercifull*, that is, for the *liberall, benigne*, and *mercifull man*, the *man of a large heart to do good*: God causeth the Cloud to come sometimes *for Correction*, usually *for his land*, to conveigh common comforts, and he hath his times wherein he causeth it to come for *the merciful*, that is, in special favour to those that are mercifull, and good, and gracious, both as they have received grace from God, and as they have done good things for and among men: He that *watereth, shall be watered also himself*, (Pro. 11. 24.) Thus you see the three-fold Message that God sends the Clouds upon, either *to Correct* men for their sin, or *for his Land*, that the Creature in general may have subsistence, or *for special favour and mercy* to his peculiar people, and for those above the rest, of good men, who are mercifull and ready to do good.

JOB, Chap. 37. Verſ. 14, 15, 16.

14. *Hearken unto this, O Job, ſtand ſtill and conſider the wondrous works of God.*

15. *Doſt thou know when God diſpoſed them and cauſed the light of his cloud to ſhine?*

16. *Doſt thou know the ballancings of the clouds, the wonderous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?*

THis context begins the ſecond part of the Chapter, wherein *Elihu*

Firſt, excireth *Job* to a ſerious contemplation of the wonderful works of God; this is expreſſed in the 14th verſe.

Secondly, He urgeth the weakneſs and inability of *Job*, and indeed of any man, to underſtand the full compaſs of thoſe works: And this he doth

Firſt, In general, as to them all, in the beginning of the 15th verſe, *Doſt thou know when God diſpoſed them?*

Secondly, he ſheweth his inability as to particulars, or the ſeveral kinds of the works of God:

Firſt, As to his *cauſing of the Light to ſhine*, in the cloſe of the 15th verſe.

Secondly, As to *his weighing or ballancing of the Clouds*, verſe 16th.

The ſumme of theſe three verſes, together with the two next which follow, make up an earneſt exhortation, that *Job* conſidering, and comparing that great power and wiſdom of God, which appear & ſhine in thoſe forementioned works, with his own weakneſs and inſufficiency, would therefore humble himſelf, and not venture any further to conteſt or plead with God.

And becauſe many of the Lords providential works are unſearchable, as wel as theſe which are natural, therefore *Elihu* would not have *Job* buſie himſelf in any curious prying into thoſe which concerned his preſent condition. For, if there be infinite and unerring wiſdom tempered with mercy, and juſtice with goodneſs, in all the outward diſpenſations of God, ordering the motions and Mete-

Meteors of the Heavens, the Clouds, the Rain, the Snow and Hail, the Lightning and the Thunder; then ſurely *Job* ought to ſit down convinced, that there is a like temperament of equity with ſeverity, and of goodneſs with ſharpneſſe in all his dealings with men, and was with him in particular. That's the ſcope and purpoſe of *Elihu* all along, in reading *Job* this Philoſophical Lecture, or in putting Queſtions to him about the things of Nature, and the regiment of God in theſe inferiour heavens, the Air, where all things ſeem to move without rule, or by no rule other than what Nature alone impoſeth.

Verſ. 14. *Hearken unto this, O Job.*

We have more than once met with this awakening exhortation, which calleth for ſuch an harkening, as if a man were to be all ear in attending what is ſpoken. We may well render it, *Ear this, O Job*, take it, drink it in at thine ear; *Hearken*

Unto this;

Elihu doth not exhort him to attention in general, but draws it down to ſome ſpecial matter, *Hearken unto this, O Job*. Which words may have a double reference, either

Firſt, to what he had ſaid before (verſ. 13th) telling him how God ſends the Rain and cauſeth the Cloud to come, *either for correction, or for his land, or for mercy*; *Hearken unto this, O Job*, here's a leſſon for thee, remember it well, God ſends forth theſe ſervants of his, the Clouds to do his work, either for correction or for mercy, either in favour or in judgment; *Hearken unto this, O Job*: Or,

Secondly, The words may refer to that which followeth, and ſo, as one calls them, they are an *Exordium*, a brief *Exordium*, or ſhort preface to what *Elihu* had further to ſay; as if he would a little relieve the ſpirits and quicken the attention of *Job*, by acquainting him, that he had ſome new matter to lay before him. As if he had ſaid, I have not yet uttered all my mind, I have ſomewhat more upon my heart, which I cannot hold in, both for thy conviction and inſtruction; *Hearken unto this, O Job.*

Yet it may be queſtioned, why *Elihu* ſhould thus ſtir up his attention, either to conſider what he had ſpoken, or what he was now about to ſpeak? Was *Job* a heedleſs, an un-attentive hear-

er? We may conceive he was occaſioned to give him this ſpur, or excitation, for theſe three reaſons, or at leaſt ſome of them.

Firſt, We may ſuppoſe, that *Job* having been entertained with a long diſcourſe, began to grow weary and ſlacken his attention, and therefore, as when we ſee one in a congregation remiſſe in hearing, or ſleeping out a weighty point, we jog him, or ſay, *Hearken to this*; ſo *Elihu* here.

Hence note, Firſt;

A good hearer of the Word, may ſometimes want an awakening word.

He that is not (as *Job* was not) a *firſt*, nor *ſecond*, nor *third-ground-hearer*, but (as *Job* was) a *fourth-ground-hearer*, one that heareth with a good and honeſt heart, yet, even he may a little let down his watch, and give juſt occaſion to the ſpeaker for ſuch a ſhort diverſion as *Elihu* here uſed, *Hearken (I pray) to this*. There is a willingneſs of ſpirit in all *fourth-ground*, or *right-hearted hearers*, yet, there is alſo, even in them, a weakneſs of the fleſh; corruption may be ſtirring, temptation may be working, therefore 'tis no unneceſſary jealouſie in the Miniſters of the Goſpel, ſometimes to mingle or interweave ſuch paſſages as theſe, in ſpeaking to them, pray hearken, ſtir up and awaken your ſelves: There may be need of this (I ſay) where there is a general good bent of heart. Some pretending hearers are like the Idols of the heathen, *who have eyes and ſee not, eares and hear not*; who, when they are hearing, ſet themſelves, at leaſt give way, to ſleep, and willingly yeeld to the drowſineſs of their ſpirits; this ſheweth an evil heart: but a good man may be overtaken with drowſineſſe, and find much indiſpoſition to duty, while he is in duty, and then he will count it a favour, to hear ſuch a word as this caſt in, *Pray hearken*.

Secondly, *Elihu* might afreſh provoke him to more ſerious attention, becauſe the matter he had to deliver, was of more importance, or did more nearly concern him, than what he had ſaid before.

Hence note;

Though the whole truth of God is to be attended to, yet there are ſome truths that call for ſpecial attention.

Here

Here is an accent put upon the point in hand, *Hearken to this*. We ſhould not let any truth fall to the ground, truth is precious quite through, and we may ſay of truth as of gold, the very filings of it are precious. We ſave the leaſt duſt of Gold, every grain of it is of worth, and ſo is every grain, or the leaſt duſt of divine truth. *One jot, one tittle of the Law* (ſaith Chriſt, *Mat.* 5. 18.) *ſhall in no wiſe paſſe till all be fulfilled*; Surely then, no jot, no tittle of it ſhould be lightly paſſed by, by us. Yet there are ſome divine truth like ſtuds of maſſie gold, or as jewels, which ought to be more carefully attended to, and laid up in the cabinet of the heart; Some truths have an emphaſis, a Selah ſet upon them, *O hearken to theſe*. Chriſt ſaith in the Goſpel, about the tything of mint, anniſe and cummin, *Theſe things ye ought to do*, but be ſure ye do not leave the weightier matters of the Law, *Judgment, Mercy and Faith undone* (Matth. 23. 23.) ſo ſay I, attend to the leaſt truths, but be ſure ye attend to fundamental truths, to thoſe truths upon which the whole weight of the ſoul ſtands; Such is, *The great Myſtery of Godlineſs, God manifeſt in the fleſh*; and the great Grace of Faith in that Myſtery: Theſe, with ſeveral others, are the fundamentals, the very vitalls of Religion; all falls and dies, unleſſe ye ſtand faſt and live in theſe: *O hearken unto them*.

Thirdly, *Elihu* may be conceived to ſpeak thus to *Job*, becauſe he ſaw him about to interrupt him; poſſibly he might perceive a little paſſion ſtirring in him, therefore, not only to keep up his attention, or to wind up his watch, but to repreſs and keep down ſome ſtormy troubled motions riſing in his ſpirit, *Elihu* made this ſhort interlocution or digreſſion, *Hearken to this, O Job*, ſuffer me to ſpeak out, do not take me off, I have not yet done.

Hence note;

Patience is neceſſary in a good hearer;

And that not only for the doing what is heard, but for the hearing of it. As we can never bring forth the fruit of that which we hear without patience, ſo neither can we without patience hear that which ſhould make us fruitful. The great grace to be exerciſed in hearing the Word, is Faith; yet we have need of Patience in hearing the Word, and that in a double reſpect.

Firſt, We have need of Patience, as to continuance in hearing.

Some

ſome would fain have done preſently, they cannot ſit it out, an hour is an year to them, the word is a wearineſs to them, they ſoon think they have enough.

Secondly, There is need of patience for ſubmiſſion to what is heard. How ſhort ſoever the Sermon is, yet when it pincheth the conſcience and pricketh the heart, it is not eaſily born. They who hear quietly ſome words of truth, will not endure ſome other; we hardly continue hearing with any patience, when to us, the word heard, is a hard ſaying, and bares hard upon either, our conſciences or our practiſes; when the finger is, as it were, laid upon, and preſſeth the ſore, few can endure it. 'Tis eaſie to hear pleaſing things, but that which croſſeth our ſpirits or our wayes calls for patience. When *Stephen*, the *Proto-martyr*, preached to the *Jews*, and brought the word home to their conſciences, by that cloſe application (*Acts* 7. 51.) *Ye ſtiff necked and uncircumciſed in heart and ear, ye do alwayes reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt; as your Fathers did, ſo do ye. At this word*, or, *when they heard theſe things, they were cut to the heart* (ſaith the text) *and they gnaſhed on them with their teeth*; their patience was quite ſpent, they could hear no longer. And when St. *Paul* ſpake to that great Aſſembly (*Acts* 22. 1,—22, 23.) *They gave him audience unto this word* (*I will ſend thee to the Gentiles*) *and then lift up their voices and ſaid, away with ſuch a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he ſhould live: Then they cryed out, and caſt off their clothes, and threw duſt in the air.* Thus they raved and were enraged, like angry, yea like mad dogs, when once their title was queſtioned, or (as we ſpeak) *their coppy-hold touched*, by the mention of the *Gentiles*, whom they greatly deſpiſed, and judged themſelves ſo much above. *Hearken to this*, to this pinching word, to the word that ſtrikes upon your luſts. *The length of a Sermon ſpoiles the patience of ſome, but the ſtrength and ſearching power of it, ſpoiles the patience of more.* A ſincere heart is willing to hear all, and is moſt pleaſed to hear that word, which gives deepeſt wounds to any corruption of heart or tranſgreſſion of life. Such words are wholſome, though bitter or ſharp, and the more they make us ſmart, the more medicinal and healing they are. *Hearken unto this, O Job,*

Stand ſtill and conſider the wonderous works of God.

שמר *Star, ſc. per mentis velliturdinem.* Aquin.

Elihu not only deſires *Job* to hearken, but to *ſtand ſtill and conſider.*

There

There is a twofold *ſtanding ſtill.*

Firſt, Bodily. I do not conceive *Elihu* impoſing any ſuch geſture or compoſure upon *Job*, as to ſtand ſtill and not ſtir his body. The Hebrew is but one word, *ſtand up.* There is a liberty as to any comly geſture of the body in hearing; a man may lawfully ſit as well as ſtand and hear, yet to ſtand up and hear, ſheweth a readineſſe of the mind, and a hungring deſire after the Word.

Secondly, There is a *ſtanding ſtill* of the mind. The body may ſtand as ſtill as a ſtake or ſtone, while the mind is in ſtrong motion, yea, while there are moſt vehement commotions and perturbations in the mind. This ſtill-ſtanding of the mind in hearing what is ſpoken may be taken in a double oppoſition.

Firſt, To any impatience, unquietneſs or uncompoſedneſs of the mind when the word is ſpoken.

Secondly, To any irreverence, ſlighting or diſregarding of the word ſpoken. To ſtand ſtill is to get the ſpirit quiet, to hear patiently; or to ſtand ſtill is to get the heart into a reverential frame, to hear affectionately. So then, to ſtand ſtill implieth both patience and reverence. We have like admonitions in the 30th chapter of this book (*verſ.* 20.) and chapter 32d (*verſ.* 16.) Yea, that admonition of *Balaam* was of like ſence with this (*Num.* 23. 18.) *Riſe up Balak, and hear.* When *Balaam* was about to deliver his parable, and declare the mind of God concerning *Iſrael*, he called upon *Balak* to riſe and ſtand up, that is, to entertain the meſſage with reſpect. *Hearken unto this, O Job, ſtand ſtill.*

Hence note;

We ought to be in a gracious quietneſs and compoſure of ſpirit when we are called to hear and mind what God hath done or ſpoken.

Further, We ought to have a quiet, ſedate, compoſed ſpirit not only when we hear doctrinal truths delivered from the word of God, but alſo when we hear of the providences and various works of God. As this word, *ſtand ſtill*, may refer to the words going before, *Hearken unto this*, ſo to thoſe which follow, *Conſider the wonderful works of God*: And then the duty required in them reaches both his Word and Works. It is a great power of grace which cauſeth the heart to *ſtand ſtill* in this ſence, that is, to

be

be in a quiet frame when the works of God trouble us, or are troublesome to us. Thus *Moses* bespake the *Israelite* (*Exod* 14. 12.) *Stand still, and see the salvation of God.* It was a very troublesome time with the *Israelites*, they were ready to give themselves and all they had for lost, when *Moses* exhorted them to *stand still.* Nothing but faith in God can make us stand still when we are ready to fail, and that will certainly do it. Unbelief makes the heart as unquiet as theirs was upon the report of a war against *Judah* (*Isa.* 7. 2.) *And his heart* (that is, the heart of *Ahaz*) *was moved, and the heart of his people as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. 'Tis hard travel of soul to stand still and see the salvation of God, when every thing seen threatens desolation.* The Lord is represented requiring us to do so (*Psal.* 46. 10.) *Be still, and know that I am God.* When the Psalmist had spoken of the desolating works of God, he added this word from the Lord, *be still*; as if he had said, the Lord commandeth you to be of a quiet and composed spirit, when all things seem to be in a hurry or confusion; for, he had said before (*vers.* 8.) *Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth!* Yet even now (saith the Lord) *Be still, and know that I am God. David* at the beginning of the Psalm had professed a firm purpose in himself and in all the faithful with him, for such a still-standing, how-ever things movedor matters should go, yea, tumble in this world (*vers.* 1, 2.) *Though the earth be moved, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar, &c. We will not fear, God is our refuge and strength.* How comely is it for man thus to stand still in a silent and believing consideration of what God hath done or is doing; to which *Elihu* called *Job* expresly, in the next words, *stand still*;

Consider the wonderous works of God.

Here is, First, Consideration.

Secondly, Consideration of the works of God.

Thirdly, Consideration of the wonderous works of God.

ההתכובנ *a* בונ *intelligere.*

To consider, is the special work of the Understanding, or of the intellectual Powers. To consider, is the most proper work of a rational creature. It is no easie matter to consider our selves, what we are, and what we have done, or what we are doing (*Hag.* 1. 7.) *Consider your wayes*: But 'tis a harder matter to consider God, as good in his being and nature, and as good in his workings & operations. That's the business of this text, *consider the wonderous works of God*; consider them in the fullness of them, and consider them fully. In which sence the Prophet reproves the *Jews* for their non-consideration, *Israel doth not know, my people do not consider* (*Isa.* 1. 3.) They do not consider what I have done, nor what I am doing; they are an inconsiderate and regardless people, and therefore a people not to be regarded. There's nothing worth the taking notice of in a people or person, who take no notice of the works of God. They who will not consider his doings will quickly be inconsiderable, and of no account with him. *Consider the wonderful works of God.*

Consideration is opposed to two things;

First, To slightness of Spirit, or the light passing over of what we hear or see.

Secondly, to unquietness and passionatess of spirit, because of what we hear or see. Some lightly pass things by, others think of the works of God in a passion, or with a kind of rage; they are rather vexing themselves about the wonderous works of God, than considering them. Consideration is a work that stands between these two extreams, slightnesse and unquietnesse of spirit. Consideration requires a serious soul, and if right, it makes the soul patient. They who once consider the works of God rightly, will rest in them satisfiedly. *Consider the wonderful works of God.*

Elihu was speaking of those works of God in the Air, the Meteors, Clouds and Rain, *&c.* as under the rule of his providence; now saith he, *Consider*

The wonderful works of God.

This informs us, that the works of God are very considerable.

First, In natural things; that is, what God doth in disposing the course of nature, must be duely considered by man.

Secondly, In civil things, that is, in what he doth in ordering the affaires of men; and these either publick in Nations, or private in Families: In all these God hath his workings, and his works in all must be considered.

Thirdly, In spiritual things, what he doth in wayes of grace upon the souls of men, in convincing and converting them, in humbling

bling and comforting them, which are his choiceſt and moſt excellent works of all. Now, though all theſe works of God are to be conſidered, the laſt eſpecially; yet the workes of God here ſet before *Job*, are thoſe in Nature, and the providential diſpoſure of them: theſe are no ſmall matters; *Elihu* calls them, and ſo they are, *wonderful*;

Conſider the wonderful works of God.

Theſe works of God in and about natural things, may be diſtributed into thoſe that are common and ordinary, or thoſe that are rare and extraordinary. *Elihu* is not treating here about the rare, extraordinary works of God, but about the common and ordinary works of God in the Clouds, the Rain and Winds, *&c.* yet he calls them *wonderful*; *Conſider* (ſaith he) *the wonderful works of God.*

From the connexion, in that *Elihu* bids *Job ſtand ſtill, and then conſider the wonderful works of God*;

Obſerve, Firſt;

We can never conſider things aright, till our minds come to a reſt and are quiet.

We cannot make a true uſe of our reaſon, when we are much moved with paſſion; we muſt *ſtand ſtill* before we can *conſider*. *Moſes*, when the buſh burned and did not conſume, *ſaid, I will now turn aſide and ſee this great ſight, why the buſh is not burnt*, (*Exod.* 3. 3.) *He went near and ſtood*, conſidering that wonderful work of God; He was not in a fright, he was not ſcared to ſee a burning buſh, but he ſtood in a well compoſed frame of mind, to conſider what his eyes beheld, or the meaning of that ſtrange ſight.

Secondly, Note;

The works of God are matter of great conſideration.

As the word of God is to be conſidered, ſo his works, and none can profitably conſider the word of God, unleſs they conſider the works of God too; His works are a Comment upon his word, the word of God is exemplified in his works; what God ſpeaketh that he doth. We may find the word of God tranſcribed in his works, *I* (ſaith *David*, Pſal. 77. 12.) *will meditate alſo of all*

all thy works, and talke of thy doings. The Character given of a godly man (*Pſal.* 1. 2.) is, *He meditates in the Law of God night and day*; and (*Pſal.* 119. 148.) *Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word.* Now as a godly man ſhould meditate the word, ſo the works of God night and day. *David* was reſolved to do ſo in the place before-mentioned; as alſo (*Pſal* 143. 5.) *I* (ſaith he) *remember the dayes of old, I meditate on all thy works: I muſe on the work of thy hands.* Did we rightly conſider the works of God, how full, how good they are, we would be more in doing good works, and we ſhould do our good works better. If any ask, How are we to conſider the works of God? I anſwer,

Firſt, Conſider them in their number, that they are many. The wonderfull works of God are innumerable; he doth not only one, not only two or three, but many, very many wonderfull works: *Many, O Lord my God* (ſaith *David*, Pſal. 40. 5.) *are the wonderfull works which thou haſt done.*

Secondly, Conſider the wonderfull works of God in their kinds or ſorts, works of Creation, or works of Providence. The works of God in Providence are very various; His works in the Heavens, & his works on the Earth, his works of judgment, and his works of mercy, his works of patience, & his works of vengeance, his works in delivering us from evill, and his works for the continuance of our good, are very various; and 'tis our duty to conſider them all. Whatſoever or howſoever God is pleaſed to work, the thoughts of man ſhould work upon it, and give him the glory of it.

Thirdly, The works of God are to be conſidered, as in their number and kinds or ſorts, ſo in their circumſtances: As we are to conſider our ſins, not only in their kind, but circumſtances, which exceedingly aggravate and heighten ſin; ſo circumſtances in the works of God muſt be conſidered, for they exceedingly heighten the works of God: As the circumſtances of a ſin may make a ſin, little for the matter, very great and exceeding ſinfull; ſo a circumſtance in any work of God may make it (though little in it ſelf) great and wonderfull. We leave out the very ſtrength of a work of mercy, when we paſſe by the circumſtances of it: A work of mercy done in ſuch a time, in ſuch a way, a work done for ſuch a people, for a people ſo undeſerving, renders the work much

more considerable, and valuable. *The Lord* (saith *David*, Psal. 111. 4.) *hath made his wonderfull works to be remembred.* The old translation saith, *The mercifull and gracious Lord hath so done his marveilous works*, that puts a *so* upon his works, he hath not only done them, but, *he hath done them so*, in such a way, with such circumstances, he hath put such marks, such accents upon them, that *they are to be remembred*, that they cannot but be remembred. It is but an half consideration of the works of God, to consider them abstractly and nakedly, without their cloathings, that is, their circumstances of time, place, persons, when, where, how, for whom, and by whom they were done.

Fourthly, We should consider the works of God, in their aims, ends, and tendencies; not only what they are, but what they lead to, what the purpose of God may be in them, with respect to our selves, with respect to the Church, with respect to the world, is very considerable. There is not a drop of rain that falls from Heaven, but it hath a purpose in it, and that not only to feed and nourish man by making the earth fruitfull, but to make our hearts and lives fruitfull.

Or thus, We are to consider the works of God in their aimes, First, as to God, to set forth his power, wisdome, goodness. Secondly, as to man; First, to draw man nearer to God; Secondly, to raise him up in thankfulness; Thirdly, in holiness and conformity to the will of God. Now, if this be to consider the works of God, then we may inferre;

Though there be many who see the works of God, yet there are but few who consider them. It is an easie thing to see the works of God, that's only eye-work, but to consider them is difficult, that's head-work and heart-work too. Though I conceive, that word rendred *to see*, is sometimes used in the sence of this Text, for consideration (*Isa.* 26. 11.) *When thy hand is lifted up they will not see.* They could not choose but see with their eyes, that such things were done, but they did not see, or rather would not see, as seeing notes considering, the hand and aime of God in doing them: They who have no mind to answer and submit to, to profit by, and conforme to the works of God, have no care, nor will they take the pains, to get such a sight of them. So that while most see the works of God ocularly, while they see the outside, the bulke and body of them, they see not the works of God spiritually, no

no nor so much as rationally. 'Tis not a glance of the eye, but the study of the mind which is required in seeing the works of God. And hence it is that though there are store of spectators and talkers of the works of God, yet there are few considerers of them. Every one almost will be speaking of the great things which God doth, saying, What do you hear? or do you not hear what is done, what is come to passe? but where is the consideration of what is done, or of what hath passed? who stayeth his thoughts, and breathes wisely upon the works of God? They are wise indeed who do so, as *David* concluded, after a long and most excellent discourse of the works of God, (*Psal.* 107. 43.) *Who is wise and will observe these things* (as if he had said, None but the wise will nor can observe them) *even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.*

Thirdly, What are those works which *Elihu* here calls the wonderfull works of God? Surely those described both in the foregoing and subsequent part of this Chapter are (which are no prodigies in Nature) the Winds, Rain, Frost, Snow, Thunder and Lightning: These are the matter of his discourse, and of these he saith *Consider the wonderfull works of God.*

Hence observe;

The common, constant, and ordinary works of God, are full of wonders.

Though we rightly distinguish the works of God (as was touched before) into ordinary and extraordinary, common and wonderfull, yet did we fully understand them, there is a kind of wonder and miraculousness in all the works of God, even in his most common, ordinary, or every dayes worke. What is more ordinary and common than the generation and formation of man, *Yet* (saith *David*, Psal. 139. 15.) *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marveilous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.* And the reason why we do not look out the wonders of that and of many other common works of God, is, because they are so common. The very falling of the Rain hath a wonder in it, the blowing of the Wind hath a wonder in it, the motion of the Clouds hath a wonder in it, the growing of every spire of grass out of the earth hath a wonder in it, the budding out of every leaf and blossom on the tree hath a wonder in it; yet because

cauſe theſe things are common, we do not think nor call them wonderfull. Every one would think it a wonder to ſee a dry rod, a rod cut off from the tree, bloſſome, as *Aarons* did (*Numb.* 17.8.) but who thinks it a wonder, to ſee a tree well rooted in the earth bloſſom every Spring? yet there is a wonder, a wonderfull work of God in that alſo. A Heathen Philoſopher could ſay from his own obſervation of things and perſons, *Cuſtom takes away admiration*. Such is the genius or ſpirit of mankind, that we never admire what we often ſee or meet with, though in it ſelf it be never ſo admirable. Who admires the motion of the Sun every day? yet the Suns motion every day is as miraculous and ſtupendious, as its ſtanding ſtill was in that day of *Joſhua's* battel with the Kings, or as its retrograde motion or going back was in that day of King *Hezekiah's* recovery from a mortal diſeaſe. That ſuch a vaſt body as the Sun, ſhould take and fulfill ſuch a journey, ſhould paſs ſuch an unconceivable ſpace in twenty-four houres, is an amazing wonder, yet no man wonders at it. It hath been ſaid, *The Sun and Moon have hardly any beholders* (they can ſcarcely get a look from us) *unleſs when Eclipſed*, and then all men ſtand gazing and wondering at them, every one will be looking towards them with hands lifted up, & ſay; *O ſtrange!* yet the Eclipſes of the Sun & Moon are far eaſier to the conceptions of Reaſon, than the motion of the Sun and Moon is, conſidering the vaſt courſe they run and performe every day. We admire things out of courſe, or when their courſe is diſturbed, yet the conſtant courſe of things is much more admirable; every time the Sun riſeth, every time the rain falleth, every time the wind bloweth, every time the tyde turneth, we have a wonderfull work of God preſented to our contemplation. Though Aſtronomers and Philoſophers have ſpoken much of the reaſon or cauſe of theſe things, yet they cannot reach the bottom of them. The *Stoicks* differ from the *Peripatetick*s, each having probable and plauſible arguments for their opinion about naturall things; yet none of them hit the matter fully, becauſe there is a wonderfulneſs in them which God is pleaſed to hide from man, as alſo becauſe they were not at all guided by a divine Light in the diſquiſition of them, but meerly by humane reaſon and naturall underſtanding.

Magnitudine verum conſpectu fallitur: Lucem cum poſſis ſpectare, ut non, quotidiana admiratione digna ſint, tranſeam. Sen. l. 7. Nat. quæſt. c. 11.

Sol ſpectatores, niſi cum deficit, habet; neuo obſervat lunam, niſi laborantem.

Let this be remember'd, The ordinary works of God have wonders in them. I ſhall conclude this poynt with paralelling the extraor-

extraordinary and ordinary works of God, as to the reall wonderfulneſs of them, by two Scripture miracles. The ſtopping of the fire from burning the *three Children*, was a wonderfull work of God; ſo alſo is the making of ſuch a creature *as burning Fire*, yet who wonders at it? It was a wonderfull work of God to ſtop the mouthes of thoſe hungry Lyons from devouring *Daniel*; ſo alſo is the making of a devouring Lyon, yet who wonders at it? Now, ſeeing there are wonders even in the ordinary works of God,

We may take much comfort in our ſtraits, for 'tis no hard matter with God to work wonders; he works ſome for us every day, they are his daily works. If we need a miracle to ſave us in an eminent danger, God can do it; when we ſee no means in the world to produce ſuch an effect, yet we are never the further from it. Gods ordinary works are full of wonder; He doth the hardeſt things with as much eaſe, as thoſe which we call and count the eaſieſt.

Elihu having thus awakened the attention of *Job*, and called him in generall to that internall work of conſideration about the external works of God, he (I ſay) having done this, deſcends to particulars in the next verſe, and thoſe which follow.

Verſ. 15. *Doeſt thou know when God diſpoſed them, and cauſed the light of his Cloud to ſhine?*

Here *Elihu* begins to come upon *Job* thick and three-fold (as we ſay) with his queſtions, he puts him many queſtions, and hard ones; and ſo doth God alſo, *Chapter* 38th, 39th, and 40th. And as here *Elihu*, ſo there God poſeth or examineth *Job* in the things of Nature. If we look from this verſe to the end of Gods diſcourſe with *Job*, we may find this queſtion, *Doeſt thou know?* put more than twenty times to *Job*. But why are theſe poſing queſtions put ſo often? I anſwer, to humble *Job* and ſilence him from queſtioning the dealings of God with him; why did God alter my condition? why have I been thus afflicted? why emptied from veſſel to veſſel, ſaid *Job*? I would faine know the reaſon of my ſufferings. Well, ſaith God, anſwer my queſtions firſt; I would know this or that of thee; and ſo ſaith *Elihu* in the behalfe of God,

Doeſt thou know when God diſpoſed them?

The word rendred *diſpoſe*, ſignifieth to order, direct, appoynt, and *cernere*. Ordinare, diſponere, de-

and determine; to dispose is all these. *Doest thou know when God disposed*

them?

What? Some refer the *them*, to all that had been spoken of before, to the Clouds, the Rain, the Thunder, the Lightning, the Light; Doest thou know when God did order the Clouds to Thunder and Rain, or the Sun to shine? As if he had said, *God disposed of these without asking thy advise*; did he acquaint thee with the orders he sent to the Clouds, or with the commands which he gave to the Lightning and the Thunder? Canst thou tell when God will work, or what he will work in the Clouds? He may be making preparation for faire weather or foule weather there, and thou never the wiser, but altogether uncertain of what he is about. Thus he humbleth *Job*, & labours to take him off from his murmurings and complainings, as also from over-bold queryings and questionings about the providential workings of God with, and towards him, by bringing him under a full conviction of his great inability to understand or comprehend the natural works of God, or when God set the Law and gave the Rule to or about these things; *Doest thou know when God disposed them?*

Hence Note;

First, *God did not only make the world, and all the furniture of it, but he disposeth the motions of every creature in it:*

All things move as they are influenced by his power, and directed by his wisdome. The date of Gods order for disposing the creature is from the beginning, yea from everlasting. As the model of the Creation, what things should be, was with him from everlasting, so was the model of Providence, how all things should be governed and disposed of. The government of the world is as much of God as the Creation or giving of it a being. From the Starrs in Heaven, to the Wormes creeping upon the Earth, all creatures were and are guided in their course by him; he hath set them bounds which they cannot passe, and sent out his word to them which they faile not to observe. Heathens, generally, did not acknowledge God to be the Maker of the world, nor did they acknowledge him the disposer of it, but ascribed all the vicissitudes here below to blind Fortune, or to uncertain Chance

Chance. *Aristotle*, the fore-man, the wisest of that rank, thought *the World was eternal*; he could not find how it had a beginning, and therefore concluded it had none: yet others of the wise Heathen had a notion that there was a beginning, that there was a first-worker, but when or how he wrought they could not tell. And as the wisest men, who had but the light of nature and reason to teach them, were very dark about the beginning of all things, so also about their motion, they thought that all things either moved of themselves, or that the supream Power having put Nature into a course, it acted alone, so that God never medled about particulars. Whereas we are taught and assured, by this Scripture-Text, and many more, that God not only made all things, but disposeth all things, even to the fall of a Sparrow upon the ground, or to the loss of an hair of the head (*Math.* 10. 29.) Christ saith also (*John* 5. 17.) *My father worketh hitherto, and I work.* Creation was a work ended in six dayes, but Providence is a work that never ends; thus God alwayes worketh, though alwayes at rest. That's the lesson here intended.

It may be matter of much comfort to us, that all things are ordered by God, that he disposeth of Thunder and Lightning, of Rain and Wind, of Snow and Frost; much more may it comfort us, that he disposeth the affaires of men, of his Church and People. *Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world* (*Acts* 15. 18.) and therefore the Prophet brings in the Lord thus speaking of himself (*Isa.* 46. 9, 10.) *I am God and there is none else, I am God and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.* He that knoweth what the end of all things will be, must needs dispose of all second causes, and intermediate acts leading thereunto. The reason why men often mis-reckon and faile of their expectation about the ends and issues of things, is, because they have not all the means in their power, yea, I may say, they have not any of the means fully, no nor at all in their own power. *The way of man is not in himself*, how then can his ends be? only God knoweth what shall be the conclusion, because he hath the full disposure of all the premises, means, and wayes, by which the conclusion is brought about. Let us adore and consider the power of God, as well in disposing of the creature, as in making of it.

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All things move as they are influenced by his power, and directed by his wisdome. The date of Gods order for disposing the creature is from the beginning, yea from everlasting. As the model of the Creation, what things should be, was with him from everlasting, so was the model of Providence, how all things should be governed and disposed of. The government of the world is as much of God as the Creation or giving of it a being. From the Starrs in Heaven, to the Wormes creeping upon the Earth, all creatures were and are guided in their course by him; he hath set them bounds which they cannot passe, and sent out his word to them which they faile not to observe. Heathens, generally, did not acknowledge God to be the Maker of the world, nor did they acknowledge him the disposer of it, but ascribed all the vicissitudes here below to blind Fortune, or to uncertain Chance

Chance. *Aristotle*, the fore-man, the wisest of that rank, thought *the World was eternal*; he could not find how it had a beginning, and therefore concluded it had none: yet others of the wise Heathen had a notion that there was a beginning, that there was a first-worker, but when or how he wrought they could not tell. And as the wisest men, who had but the light of nature and reason to teach them, were very dark about the beginning of all things, so also about their motion, they thought that all things either moved of themselves, or that the supream Power having put Nature into a course, it acted alone, so that God never medled about particulars. Whereas we are taught and assured, by this Scripture-Text, and many more, that God not only made all things, but disposeth all things, even to the fall of a Sparrow upon the ground, or to the loss of an hair of the head (*Matth.* 10. 20.) Christ saith also (*John* 5. 17.) *My father worketh hitherto, and I work.* Creation was a work ended in six dayes, but Providence is a work that never ends; thus God alwayes worketh, though alwayes at rest. That's the lesson here intended.

It may be matter of much comfort to us, that all things are ordered by God, that he disposeth of Thunder and Lightning, of Rain and Wind, of Snow and Frost; much more may it comfort us, that he disposeth the affaires of men, of his Church and People. *Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world* (*Acts* 15. 18.) and therefore the Prophet brings in the Lord thus speaking of himself (*Isa.* 46. 9, 10.) *I am God and there is none else, I am God and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.* He that knoweth what the end of all things will be, must needs dispose of all second causes, and intermediate acts leading thereunto. The reason why men often mis-reckon and faile of their expectation about the ends and issues of things, is, because they have not all the means in their power, yea, I may say, they have not any of the means fully, no nor at all in their own power. *The way of man is not in himself*, how then can his ends be? only God knoweth what shall be the conclusion, because he hath the full disposure of all the premises, means, and wayes, by which the conclusion is brought about. Let us adore and consider the power of God, as well in disposing of the creature, as in making of it.

Again, *Doeſt thou know?* &c.

Surely thou doeſt not. The queſtion here, as often elſewhere, carrieth in it a ſtrong denial.

Hence Note;

Men know little of the works and wayes of God.

Some men are called *knowing*, and others *ignorant*, but all men are deficient in their knowledge both of the nature and works of God. *Doeſt thou know?* But was *Job* ſome ignorant ſimple perſon? Surely no, *Job* was one of the wiſeſt as well as greateſt men of that age, he was as well verſed as any in the ſtudy and knowledge both of natural and ſpiritual things; Nor is he charged by *Elihu* here with ignorance ſimply, but with ignorance *as to this*, this was too high and too hard for him. *We may with reverence enough queſtion their knowledge in ſome things, who are very knowing men in moſt things.*

There are ſome things which 'tis a ſhame for a man not to know. The Apoſtle ſpeaks often in that language (*Rom.* 2. 4.) *Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance?* What a ſhame is it that any who know any thing ſhould not know and underſtand the ſcope of the mercy of God to ſinners; What! knoweſt thou not, that forbearance leads to repentance? Again, the ſame Apoſtle in the ſame Epiſtle puts the like upbraiding queſtion (*Rom.* 7. 1.) *Know ye not (for I ſpeak to them that know the Law) how that the Law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth.* He is not worthy to be reckoned as a piece of mankind, who is altogether unknowing; nor is he worthy to be reckoned among the men of his profeſſion, who knows not the common principles of it. While the Apoſtle ſpake to thoſe who knew the Law, he preſumed they were not ignorant of that Rule in Law, that the Law which hath or ſhould have dominion over all men living, hath no dominion over any man beyond this life. Now (I ſay) as it is a ſhame for any man not to know thoſe things which are required of him, and ſpecially concern him, ſo 'tis a preſumption for any man to ſeek the knowledge of thoſe things which are purpoſely reſerved and hidden from him, (*Deut.* 29. 29.) *Secret things belong to God, revealed things to us and to our children.* Chriſt ſaith of the latter day, of the day of Judgment, (*Matth.* 24. 36.) *Of that day and houre knoweth no man, no not the Angels of Heaven, but my Father only:* and he removed the curioſity of his Apoſtles immediately before his aſcenſion, for enquiring after that kind of knowledge (*Acts* 1. 7.) *It is not for you to know the times or the ſeaſons which the Father hath put in his own power.* As it is not profitable, ſo not lawfull for us to look after the knowledge of thoſe things, which God hath lockt up and kept ſecret. Let us take heed we be neither found unknowing in thoſe things which it is a ſhame for us not to know, nor curiouſly prying into the knowledge of thoſe things which are reſtrained from our knowledge. But (to the preſent poynt) it may be much matter of humiliation to us, that of thoſe things which we have a liberty, and 'tis our duty to know, we know ſo little. *Job* had free liberty to know, and ſearch after the knowledge of thoſe things about which *Elihu* put his queſtions, the Meteors of the air, and the motions of thoſe ſuperiour bodyes; yet *Elihu* knew he could ſay little in anſwer to theſe queſtions, when he asked him, *Doeſt thou know?* &c. And therefore his purpoſe was to humble *Job*, while he made him ſee and know his own ignorance. And did the moſt knowing man in the world know his own ignorance, that would (I am ſure it might) make him very humble. We are apt to be very proud of a very ſmall portion of knowledge, a little puffs us up; whereas the ſence of our defects in knowledge may both make and keep us little in our own eyes: *We ſhould be thankfull for that little which we know, and humble becauſe we know ſo little.*

Elihu having by the Queſtion now opened, convinced *Job* in in general that he knew but little of the works of God, proceeds in the cloſe of this verſe, and further forwards, to convince him further of his defectiveneſs in knowledge, by putting the ſame queſtion about many other particulars: And the firſt particular about which he puts the ſame queſtion, is the Light of the Cloud;

Doeſt thou know when God diſpoſed them,

And cauſed the light of his Cloud to ſhine?

He queſtions *Job* again about another poynt, the weighing the Clouds (*v.* 16.) *Doeſt thou know the ballancing of the Clouds, the wonderfull works of him that is perfect in knowledge?* As if he

had ſaid, *Gods cauſing the light of his Cloud to ſhine, and his ballancing the Clouds, are wonderfull works, even the wonderfull works of him who is perfect in knowledge; and tell me Job, Doeſt thou know theſe things? Doeſt thou know when God diſpoſed them,*

And cauſed the light of his Cloud to ſhine?

We muſt here repeat the former queſtion; and, *Doeſt thou know when God cauſed the light of his Cloud to ſhine?* yea, ſome read this latter part of the verſe in dependance upon the former; *Doeſt thou know when God diſpoſed them, that he might cauſe the light of his Cloud to ſhine?* But I rather take it as a diſtinct Queſtion. In which, conſider, he doth not ſay, *That he may cauſe the light of his Sun, but of his Cloud, to ſhine.* 'Tis the Sun properly that ſhineth, Clouds do not: The Sun is the Candle of the World, the receptacle and veſſel of light. Clouds are but veſſels or receptacles of water, they are not properly diaphanous, but opacous, or groſſe, thick bodyes: How then is it here ſaid, *He cauſeth the light of his Cloud to ſhine?* I anſwer, The Cloud doth not ſhine by any connatural or intrinſick light, but by that which is adventitious, and accidental to it. And,

יפע a הופיע *Splenduit inclaruit.*

There is more in that word *ſhine*, than the ordinary ſhining of the Sun; the Hebrew root ſignifies not only to ſhine, but to break forth with ſhining in ſome very illuſtrious manner) *Deu.* 33. 2.) *The Lord came from Sinai, and roſe up from Seire unto them, he ſhined forth from Mount Paran. Moſes* carrieth a metaphor or borrowed ſpeech quite through the verſe, repreſenting God as the Sun ſhining forth and ſhewing himſelf to the people of *Iſrael*, in three ſeveral places, & as it were in as many diſtinct degrees of glorious manifeſtation. His glory ſhined firſt from Mount *Sinai*, where he gave the Law. Secondly, from Mount *Seir* or *Edom*, where (as I may ſay) he gave the Goſpel, commanding *Moſes* to make a Brazen Serpent, that they who looked on it might be cured of the poyſonous wounds given them by the fiery Serpents, (*Numb.* 21.) An illuſtrious type of Chriſt (*Joh.* 3. 14.) Thirdly, the glory of the Lord ſhined from Mount *Paran*, where *Moſes*, by command from the Lord, made repetition of the Law, adding ſundry Evangelical explications of it. In all which the Lord ſhined forth with a glorious brightneſs, infinitely exceeding that of the Sun. *David* in three of his *Pſalms* ſpeaking of the wonderfull

full appearances and diſcoveries of God, Firſt, to ſave his people; Secondly, to judge and deſtroy his enemies, uſeth this word which here we tranſlate *ſhine*, (Pſal. 50. 1.) *The mighty God, even the Lord, hath ſpoken and called the Earth from the riſing of the Sun, to the going down of the ſame; out of Zion the perfection of beauty God hath ſhined.* That beauty with which God ſhines out of *Zion* in the divine ſplendor and holineſs of his worſhip and ordinances is very glorious. Again, (*Pſal.* 80. 1.) *Give eare O Shepherd of Iſrael, thou that leadeſt Joſeph like a flock, thou that dwelleſt between the Cherubims, ſhine forth*; that is, declare thy ſelf in thy mighty power, as it followeth (*verſ.* 2.) *Before Ephraim Benjamin and Manaſſeh, ſtir up thy ſelf, and come and ſave us.* And as the gracious appearances of God for the ſaving of his people, ſo likewiſe the dreadfull appearances of God for the deſtruction of his enemies, are expreſſed by this word (*Pſal.* 94. 1.) *O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, ſhew thy ſelf*: The Hebrew is (and ſo we put it in the Margin) *ſhine forth.* Thus the word notes no ordinary ſhining, but ſhining both with vengeance, and with ſalvation; which latter falls in well with the Interpretation of the light ſhining in the Cloud, which I ſhall open a little further.

And cauſeth the light of his Cloud to ſhine.

There are three Interpretations of theſe words.

Firſt, Some by the *light of the Cloud*, underſtand the lightning, which (all know) breaks through the Cloud, and ſhines out wonderfully before it Thunders. The light of lightning is a wonderfull light.

Sciſne quòd deus nubem eſſet diſcuſſurus ac ea diſcuſſa ſerenitatem invecturus. Merc:

Secondly, Others underſtand, by *the light of his Cloud*, the light of the Sun ſcattering the Cloud, and as it were, turning the Cloud into light, making light where none was, or nothing but a thick dark Cloud.

Iris eſt lux in nube rorida et egregium opus deis de illa malumus exponere, cum ante fulguris mentionem fecerit. Scult:

Thirdly, Several learned Interpreters expound the *light of his Cloud*, by *the Rainbow*, which is alſo a very illuſtrious light, and that is eminently the *light of Gods Cloud*, 'tis his light in the Cloud. We may alſo call it a light of the Cloud; for though the light of the Sun falleth upon the clouds, yet the light of the Sun at other times is not ſo properly called the light of the Cloud, as the light of the Rainbow is, or as when the light of the Sun, reflecting from

from or upon the Cloud, cauſeth that Meteor, which we call the Rainbow; and therefore 'tis emphatically expreſt by this circumlocution, *the ſhining of the light of his Cloud*. The ſhining light of the Rainbow hath in it a great appearance of God, for the help, ſalvation, and deliverance of his people, 'tis a token of the good-will of God to man. And that we ſhould rather expound this place of the Rainbow, than either of the Lightning, or the Sun-ſhine, I ſhall briefly give theſe foure Reaſons, upon which I ground the Expoſition.

Firſt, *Elihu* had ſpoken of the Lightning and of the Sun-ſhine in the former parts of his diſcourſe, and therefore it is not probable that he ſhould return to either ſo ſoon.

Secondly, In this whole philoſophical Lecture of *Elihu*, wherein he enters into the treaſures of theſe lower Heavens, there is no mention at all of the Rainbow, unleſs we fix it upon this place; therefore ſeeing he had ſpoken of the Lightning and of the Sun-ſhine, in the former parts of his diſcourſe, and ſpeaks not at all afterward of the Rainbow, it is moſt probable that he intends it here.

Thirdly, He is ſpeaking of the wonders of God in the Clouds; and ſurely his diſcourſe would have been imperfect, if he had omitted this, which as ſome expreſs it, is the moſt wonderfull of wonderfull things among the Clouds, and one of the great ſecrets in Nature; I ſay he ſhould have omitted a great part of that which belongs to the doctrine of the Meteors (all Meteorological Writers particularly handling this Doctrine of the Rainbow) if it be not found here.

Mirabilium mirabiliſſimum; Naturæ arcanum. Græci vocant iridem Thaumantias ἀπὸ τοῦ θαύματος ab admiratione, cum admirabilem figuram in aere exprimat.

We may take a fourth Reaſon of this Expoſition, becauſe this light is ſaid to ſhine *in his Cloud*: 'tis true, all Clouds are his, that is, Gods Clouds; but the Cloud in which the Rainbow doth at any time appear, is in a way of peculiarity and higher ſignificancy called *the Cloud of God, or Gods Cloud*. All the Clouds are as Gods Bow, out of which he ſhoots his Arrows and Bolts; they are alſo called the *Seat of God*, on them he ſitteth as upon his Throne. Again, they are called *his Chariot*, upō them he rideth in his Majeſty; but the Rainbow-cloud, is, as it were, the *Royal Robe or Diadem of God*, the ſpecial Clothing of God. The Lord ſaith at the 13th *verſe* of the 9th of *Geneſis*, where we have the firſt mention of the Rainbow, *I do ſet my Bow in the Cloud*; the Bow is Gods, and the

the Cloud is Gods, he is entitled to them both in a very eminent and ſpecial manner. God calleth it *his Cloud*, and *his Bow*; Not only, Firſt, becauſe he made the Cloud, & the Sun-beams by which the Bow is made. But, Secondly, and chiefly, becauſe he hath put it to a ſpecial uſe, and given it a myſtical ſignification.

And therefore here we may take notice, that whereas the Rainbow is naturally a ſign of Rain, for it is alwayes accompanied with Clouds, or at leaſt with a Cloud ready to diſſolve and melt into Rain; and is therefore called by the Poet (*Nuncia Junonis, Virg. Æneid.* 4.) the *Harbingreſſe of Juno*: yet on the contrary God appoynts it as a ſign of faire weather. And indeed God often works by contrary means, leſt we ſhould ſtick in means, and aſcribe the effect, more than is due, to them. So then the Rainbow hath two different ſignifications, the firſt natural, of Rain, nor doth God promiſe to hinder or alter this courſe of nature. Secondly, preternatural or inſtituted, of faire weather; which Philoſophy, and the world, is altogether ignorant of; only the Church and people of God underſtand it by faith upon the teſtimony or revealed will of God, that as often as the Bow appeareth in the Cloud, they have a renewed aſſurance that God will remember the Earth, and moderate the Rain: nor doth this depend upon the nature of, or various colours appearing in the Rainbow, but purely upon the will and inſtitution of God. And therefore we ought by a firme faith to embrace the word of promiſe, to which this ſign is annexed; without that, the Rainbow is nothing elſe to us, but the image or repreſentation of the rayes of the Sun or Moon, impreſſed upon the Clouds.

I ſhall not inſiſt upon any large diſcourſe of the Rainbow, only take two or three things. This Meteor hath three Attributes above the reſt; Firſt, it is the moſt illuſtrious and beautifull; Secondly, the moſt deſirable and comfortable; Thirdly, the moſt ſtrange and wonderfull of all the impreſſions viſible in the air. This is properly expreſſed by a Bow, becauſe the forme of it uſually is ſemicircular. *Luther* ſaith he ſaw a Rainbow in the forme of a perfect Circle; and others report they have ſeen it in the forme of a ſtrait line: But in what-ever form it appears, the natural cauſe of it is the reflection of the Sun or of the Moon (for there are Rainbows in the night as well as in the day) it is cauſed; I ſay, by the reflection of the light of the Sun or Moon) upon or from a watery

Iris ab εἰρω quod eſt dicere ſive loqui. Iris eſt arcus, qui ex reflexione luminis, cum ſolaris tum lunaris, in nubem roridam oppoſitam gignitur. Garcæ.

tery or dewey Cloud oppoſite to either. The Latine word *Iris*, is derived from a greek word, which ſignifieth to ſpeak or to relate ſomthing: The Rainbow is elegantly ſo called, becauſe it foreſhews ſomtimes rain, ſomtimes faire weather. A Rainbow in the morning is a ſign of ſhowres, in the afternoon it betokens ſerenity, and alwayes it proclaims to us the promiſe of God for the moderation of rain; or it ſpeaks thus much to all the world, that God will ſo meaſure out the Rain from the Clouds, that it ſhall never ſwell to an univerſal Deluge, or to a drowning of the whole world again. Thus the Rainbow hath a ſpeech, a language of mercy in it towards the preſent world. It ſpeaks alſo the Juſtice of God upon the old world, minding us of that Deluge of water that drowned them for their ſin; they had ſo defiled the Earth by their evil manners and prophaneſs, by their will-worſhip, Superſtition and Idolatry, that God in wrath ſent a Flood of water, not to waſh, or refreſh, but to deſtroy them: The Rainbow minds us of that dreadfull Judgment of God upon a corrupt World. And although the Rainbow gives us aſſurance that the World ſhall not be drowned again, how ſinfull ſoever it is, yet ſome, from the various colours of the Rainbow, whereof one is red and fiery, tell us, it proclaims that the World ſhall at laſt be conſumed by Fire. The Apoſtle *Peter* is plain that it ſhall be ſo, (2 *Ep:* 3. 10.) *The Elements ſhall melt with fervent heat*; nor is it meerly a phancy, to ſay, that the fiery colours in the Rainbow are ſet there by God, to mind us of it.

Some have queſtioned whether the Rainbow were before the Flood or no? The reaſon or ground of the queſtion is given from that ſaying of God (*Gen.* 9. 13.) *I will ſet my Bow in the Cloud*: it ſeems then there was no Rainbow before the Flood.

I anſwer, The Rainbow may be conſidered two wayes; Firſt, as to its natural being; Secondly, as to its myſtical uſe. If we conſider the Rainbow as to its natural being, it was before the Flood, for the cauſes of it were before the Flood, which are watery Clouds and the ſhining of the Sun: *Now when ſufficient cauſes appear in act, the effect doth certainly follow.* But as to its myſtical uſe, it was not before the Flood. Water had its natural elementary being and uſe, before Baptiſme was inſtituted, but it had not a ſpiritual uſe till then: we may ſay the ſame of the Rainbow. Some I know of the Moderns, *Luther* and *Melancthon* aſſert, it

it was not in being till then; but we have reaſon to vary from that opinion, with reverence to thoſe worthy men: For God did not ſay in the 9th of *Geneſis*, I will make or create my Bow in the Cloud, but, *I do ſet my Bow in the Cloud, and it ſhall be there for a token of a Covenant between me and the Earth.* The Rainbow had no ſuch ſignification, nor was it ſet in the Cloud for any ſuch purpoſe, before that time. So then,

Take the Rainbow as to its myſtical uſe, ſo I grant, it was not before the Flood; till then God had never cauſed the light of his Cloud to ſhine as a Covenant-token. The Rainbow, had alwayes a natural ſignification in it, but that is not all, it hath now alſo a Theological, divine and myſtical ſignification, and is become as the Seal of that Covenant with mankind; for God inſtituted the Rainbow as a Sacramental ſign (ſo we may expreſſe it for our better underſtanding) both between himſelf and the whole World in general, and in ſpecial between himſelf & his Covenant people (*Gen.* 9. *v.* 12, 13, 14, 15.) It was given (I ſay) on purpoſe to Seal the truth of the Promiſe, that the whole Earth ſhould no more be overwhelm'd with a Deluge or Flood of water: Which though it be ſuch a promiſe as the whole Creation hath the benefit of, yet the faithfull only underſtand the myſterie of it, and have their faith exerciſed upon it, and ſtrengthened by it. So that while the Rainbow is the ſign of a temporal Covenant to all creatures, the godly may look upon it, with reference to all ſpiritual and eternal mercies by Chriſt, in whom all the promiſes of mercy are *Yea and Amen*, (2 *Cor.* 1. 20.) And there is a great fitneſs in it to hold forth mercy both temporal and ſpiritual, in ſeveral particulars.

Firſt, This Rainbow is in the Cloud, and God placed it in the Cloud, becauſe out of the Cloud came the Rain which drowned the old world. God could have drowned the world only by letting out, or breaking up the Springs of water from the earth, but he opened the Cataracts of Heaven alſo to do it. And therefore God, to ſecure the world againſt ſuch another vengeance from the Clouds, put his Bow in the Cloud.

A ſecond ſignificancy of mercy in the Rainbow, is, becauſe the Bow is bended upwards, or Heaven-ward, the Bow doth not ſtand bent to the Earth, or downward, the ſtring of the Bow is towards us, not the back of it. He that would ſhoot hath the bottom or

 back

back of the Bow in his hand, and the ſtring is towards himſelf; but God, that he might ſhew he doth not intend to ſhoot that Arrow any more, holds the ſtring of the Bow downwards, which no man doth that hath a mind to ſhoot. The Lord by this Bow in the Cloud ſhoots no man, unleſſe it be (as one well expreſſeth it) with admiration and love; or I may ſay, the Lord having ſhot his Arrowes of immoderate Rain from the Region of the air for mans chaſtning, ſeems to return to Heaven with his Bow reverſed, as a token of peace and ſerenity to the world, or that in Judgment he remembers his Covenant-mercy. The wicked are ſaid to *bend their Bow, they make ready their arrow upon the ſtring, that they may privily ſhoot at the upright in heart*, (Pſal. 11. 2.) But he that turns the ſtring of his Bow downwards, is not ready, nor ſeems minded to ſhoot at all.

Thirdly, This bow ſhews mercy, becauſe there is no Arrow ſeen at it, or with it.

Concipit iris aquas alimentaq; nubibus affert. Ovid: 1. Metam:

Fourthly, It ſheweth or ſignifieth mercy, becauſe the Rainbow uſually appears when Rain is ready to come, implying that the Rain ſhall not hurt us; and ſo we have a ſupport of our faith, as ſoon as we have any appearance of feare.

Fifthly, When-ever the Rainbow appears, there is clearneſs in ſome part of the air; for it cannot be but when the Sun ſhines. In the time of the Flood the light of the Sun was wholly obſcured. All the dayes which the world had during that dreadfull Rain, were (like the day deſcribed, *Joel* 2. 2. *Zeph.* 1. 15.) *dayes of darkneſs, and of gloomineſs, dayes of Clouds and of thick darkneſs.* Therefore 'tis ſaid, (*Gen.* 8. 22.) *Day and night ſhall continue for ever*: Intimating that in the time of the Flood the day was ſo obſcured, ſo black, that it could ſcarcely be known to be day, or diſtinguiſhed from night. But now when the Rainbow is ſeen, the Sun ſhines, to give aſſurance that though there be an appearance of Rain, yet the light of the day ſhall not ceaſe.

Lux in nube rorida mille effidit colores et varias et pulcherrimas lucis temperationes. Plin: Natur: Hiſt: *l.* 12. *c.* 24.

Sixthly, The various colours of the Rainbow are very ſignificant for our comfort, making (as ſome Naturaliſts have told us) a thouſand ſweet delights for the eye, by the admirable mixtures and ſhadowings of colours therein diſcernable.

Seventhly, The Natural Hiſtorian aſſureth us, that where the Rainbow at any time toucheth the Earth (as we may often obſerve it doth) it leaveth a fragrant ſmell upon the graſs, ſhrubs and buſhes.

buſhes. Thus you ſee how properly and fitly the Rainbow is called *The ſhining of the light of his Cloud*, as alſo what ſignifications of favour are diſcernable in it. From this explication of the words, we may note;

First, *After troubles and ſtormes, God will give his people comforts and calmes.*

He cauſeth the light of his Cloud to ſhine. Clouds are dark things, but while the Cloud ſhews Rain, Gods light in the Cloud ſhews faire weather. That's matter of rejoycing to all that fear God, as with reſpect unto that particular Judgment of the Deluge, ſo of all evils and troubles which fall upon them in this world. This light ſhining in the Cloud may comfort and refreſh us in the darkeſt night of ſorrow. It is ſaid (*Pſal.* 97. 11.) *Light is ſowne for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart*: And in the 4th of the *Revelations* (which is as it were a Prologue or Preface to all the Propheſies of the dark times that ſhould come upon the world, and over the Church of God in this world) we find Jeſus Chriſt is repreſented with a Rainb[illegible]bout him (*verſ.* 3.) *I was in the ſpirit, and behold a Throne ſe[illegible]eaven, and one ſat on the Throne, and he that ſat was to look upon like a Jaſper and Sardix ſtone, and there was a Rainbow round about the Throne, in ſight like to an Emrald.* From this Throne it is that Jeſus Chriſt doth, as I may ſay, diſpence all the affaires of his Churches and people. Now though Jeſus Chriſt in the providential or mediatorial government of his Churches, doth often ſend Clouds upon them, and though Clouds and darkneſs are round about him, yet the Throne hath a Rainbow about it: And why a Rainbow? to ſhew that Jeſus Chriſt is mindfull of his Churches and people, to ſave them when the Serpent caſts out Floods to drown them. 'Tis ſaid (*Rev:* 12. 15.) *The Serpent caſt out of his mouth water as a Flood after the Woman, that he might cauſe her to be carried away of the Flood*; but Jeſus Chriſt that ſitteth upon the Throne, hath a Rainbow about h[illegible], which gives aſſurance that the Floods ſhall not quite overwhelme the Church, ſhe ſhall be delivered, though it be in a Wilderneſs, from thoſe mighty water-floods of perſecution raiſed and cauſed by the Serpent and his ſeed againſt the ſeed of the Woman, or againſt the Woman and her ſeed. Though Chriſt may ſuffer great Floods of ſorrow and tribulation to be powred

 upon

upon them, yet there is a Rainbow about the Throne to which we may look, and get our faith confirmed, that the Woman and her Seed ſhall not be ſwallowed up.

Take one place more (*Rev.* 10. 1.) *I ſaw another mighty Angel coming down from heaven* (that was Jeſus Chriſt) *cloathed with a cloud* (that is, with dark diſpenſations, ſuch as his people ſhould not well know what to make of; but what follows?) *and a Rainbow was on his head.* That Propheſie leads into a deſcription of the greateſt preſſures and troubles that ever the Church of God was to ſuffer in this world. Jeſus Chriſt was cloathed with a Cloud, but, for the comfort of his Church, there was a Rain-bow on his head, there was light ſhining in this Cloud, to bear up the ſpirits of his people, that the miſchief ſhould not be to their deſtruction, though it might be very much not only to their tryal, but correction. And we find the Church ſupported, though not directly under this notion of a Rain-bow, yet by a promiſe plainly hinting, if not referring to it (*Iſa.* 54. 9.) In the 8th verſe the Prophet tells us, that the poor Church was in very great trouble; Why? Surely becauſe of ſome cloudy providences, which interrupted the light of Gods countenance from ſhining upon them, at leaſt to their apprehenſion; for thus he ſpake the Church, *In a little wrath have I hid my face from thee, for a moment* (there was the Cloud) *but with everlaſting loving-kindneſs will I have mercy on thee, ſaith the Lord thy Redeemer* (there's the Rain-bow) *for this is as the waters of Noah; for as I have ſworn the waters of Noah ſhall no more go over the earth* (which was ſignified by the Rain bow) *ſo have I ſworn that I will be no more wrath with thee, nor rebuke thee: For the mountains ſhall depart, and the hills ſhall be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the Covenant of my peace be removed any more, ſaith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.* Then follows, *O thou afflicted and toſſed with tempeſt, and not comforted,* behold, *I will lay thy ſtones with fair colours, and thy foundations with ſaphiers, and I will make thy windows of agats, and thy gates of carbuncles.* As if he had ſaid, though I have hid my face yet I will return, for this is as the waters of *Noah*; that is, I have as certainly reſolved in my ſelf that this unnatural flood ſhall not drown thee, as I once promiſed, and am ſo reſolved ſtill, that the natural flood ſhall never drown the world again; and mark how he expreſſeth it, *as I have ſworne.* When we read the hiſtory in

in *Geneſis*, it is not ſaid, that the Lord ſwore; but the Lord to ſhew that his word is as good as his oath, tells us that what he ſpake to *Noah*, was as if he had ſworn it, eſpecially ſeeing he gave ſuch a ſign for the performance of it. I might ſhew from other Scriptures, that God is ſometimes repreſented ſwearing, when yet we read of no oath formally given: It is ſaid (*Exod.* 32. 13.) God ſware to *Abraham* and his Seed; to which the Apoſtle refers (*Heb.* 6. 13, 17.) *God confirmed it by an oath*; yet if we look thoſe ſcriptures, *Gen.* 12. 2, 3. *Ch.* 15. 7. *Ch.* 17. 7. we find only the *Lord ſaid*, &c. The Lords ſaying is as good that is, as ſure as his ſwearing, and ſhall as certainly be performed.

For a concluſion of this matter; let it be remembred, that the Lord by *cauſing the light of his Cloud to ſhine*, at firſt gave, and ſtill gives a ſign, or a ſeal to ſtrengthen faith. Signs and ſeals are appendices to the Covenant, or great Charter of all our mercies. Signs and ſeales are viſible words, God ſpeaks by them to the eye. *I will ſet my Bow in the Cloud*; God ſaith, the Bow ſhall be a ſign, he alſo hath made Water a ſign in the holy Sacrament of Baptiſme, and he hath made Bread and Wine ſignes in the holy Sacrament of the Supper; God hath been pleaſed, from the beginning ſo far to condeſcend to mans weakneſs, as to give him, not only his Word or Promiſe, but Signes to confirm it. And therefore did the Lord give a ſign, becauſe, as himſelf hath both an all-ſufficient power, and full purpoſe to performe his promiſe, ſo he would have the faith of all that are under the Covenant well aſſured of his faithfulneſs in performing it.

Thus we ſee the ſpiritual uſefulneſs of this interpretation, taking, *the light of his Cloud*, for that illuſtrious ſign the Rain-bow ſet by God in the Cloud, and moſt fitly called *the light ſhining in his Cloud*; which he doth not cauſe to ſhine ordinarily or every day as the Sun doth, but at ſpecial times, teſtifying his eminent favour to ſome, and his care over all mankind. *Knoweſt thou when he cauſed the light of his Cloud to ſhine?* *Elihu* proceeds further with *Job* upon *interrogatories.*

Verſ. 16. *Doſt thou know the ballancing of the Clouds, the wonderful work of him that is perfect in knowledge.*

Here's another queſtion. The general ſcope of all theſe queſtions was handled before, I ſhall now only poynt at that which this queſtion.

queſtion ſpecially aymes at. Mr. *Broughton* reads, *Doſt thou know the poyſing of the thick vapours?* This is a wonderful work of God. The Clouds are huge ponderous bodies; who is able to gueſs how much a Cloud weighs? yet God ballanceth the Clouds, he, as it were, puts them into ſcales, and knows what they weigh; he ſo orders them, that one part doth not over-power the other, but both hang with an even poiſe in the air; this is a wonderful work of God. *Doſt thou know how God doth this?* or, how he makes the Clouds bigger or leſſer, how he placeth them higher or lower, according to the ſervice and uſe to which he hath appoynted them? Can any man do this? Can any man fully underſtand how ſuch vaſt bodies as the Clouds ſhould be poiſed or ballanced? how they hover over our heads, and are kept from falling upon us? We muſt have recourſe to the wiſdome and power of God for this. *Doſt thou know the ballancing of the Clouds?*

Librationes nubis appellat eleganter meo quidem judicio, cum in aere appenſæ velut librantur a Domino. Merc. מפלשי *Vertitur libramenta, a* פלט *ponderavit, ad trutinam direxit mutata* ט *in* ש.

Hence we may infer, Firſt;

If man knoweth not the ballancing of the Clouds, then much leſs can he ballance them. And

Secondly, Note;

'Tis by a divine power that the Clouds are upheld and ballanced.

All heavy things tend downward; what then but God keeps the Clouds up, which are ſo heavy? 'Tis a wonder that we have not Seas of waters, rather than ſhowers poured upon us from the Clouds. They that travaile far at Sea, ſee the Rain coming down by ſpouts, or like a flood in ſome places; and certainly the Clouds would come down every where like a flood if God did not hold them up. From which particular inſtance *Elihu* would have us take up this general truth, *that,*

All things are kept in an even ballance by the wiſdome and power of God. The things of the world, if God did not ballance them, how would they tumble and fall awry, yea, run to ruine! were there not a ballancing operation in the arm of God, over all the affairs and buſineſſeſs of men, what a hudle and confuſion would all be in? We read in Scripture of foure things which God is ſaid to weigh or to ballance, they are all very conſiderable.

Firſt, It is ſaid, God weigheth the waters (*Job.* 28.25.) which may be underſtood, not only of the waters above in the Clouds, but

but of the waters alſo in the Sea; he knows to a dram, to a grain, how much all the waters weigh.

Secondly, Which are alſo vaſt things, It is ſaid (*Iſa.*40.12.) *He weigheth the mountains in ſcales, & the hills in a ballance.* And as both theſe are true taken litterally, ſo they are true alſo if you take them myſtically or metaphorically. St *John* was ſhewed *the judgment of the great whore*, in a viſion, who *ſitteth upon many waters* (Rev. 17. 1.) Who are meant by waters is explained there (v. 15.) even *Peoples, and Multitudes, Nations, and Tongues.* The people of the world are compared to waters, and well they may, for their inſtability; *Unſtable they are as water* (Gen. 49. 4.) and for their aptneſs to ſwell and riſe up into floods. Now the Lord weigheth theſe myſticall Waters, Multitudes, and Nations: he knows exactly what they are, what they would be, and what they would do. And as by waters common people or nations, ſo by mountaines and hills the great the mighty ones of the nations are expreſt; Princes and honourable men are as great mountains. Thus ſpake the Prophet, *The day of the Lord ſhall be againſt the mountains* (*Iſa.* 2.) that is, againſt the mighty men of this world; Hence that deriding queſtion, *Who art thou O great mountain before Zerubbabel?* (Zac.4.7.) That is, O thou great man, who art thou? ſurely, thou art not ſo much as a mole-hil before the God of *Zerubbabel*, who when he *comes down, the mountaines melt down at his preſence* (Iſa.64.1.) who, *if he doth but touch the mountains, they ſmoake* (Pſal. 144. 5.) as if ſtruck with Thunder. God weighs theſe mountains of the earth, that is, he conſiders and unſtands them exactly. God weighed him who was the greateſt mountain, of a man, in his time; *Belſhazzar* was the ſole Monarch of the earth, he had almoſt the whole known world at his command, yet the Lord ſaid of him (*Dan.* 5.22.) *Thou art numbred, thou art weighed, and thou art found too light.*

Thirdly, As God weigheth men of all ſorts, ſo he weigheth the actions of all ſorts of men (2 *Sam.* 2.3.) *By him actions are weighed*, that is, all actions are weighed by him; the leaſt actions are weighed by the mighty God, and ſo are the greateſt, he knoweth how to poyſe them, and ſo make uſe of them, that they may effect what is anſwerable to his own counſel and purpoſe. This is it which the Prophet intended, when he ſaid of the Lord, *Thou moſt upright doſt weigh the path of the Juſt* (*Iſa.* 26.7.) that is, the motions, and

and goings, or doings of the Just. The pathes of the Just come often into very uneven ballances in this world, every one will be weighing them, one gives this judgement of them, and another that, few hit right, the most of men being either blinded with ignorance of them, or prejudiced with malice against them: But the comfort of the just is, the *most upright weigheth their path*, and will give the just weight of them.

Fourthly and lastly, God weigheth the very spirits of men. *All the wayes of man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits* (saith *Solomon*, *Prov.* 16. 2.) The Lord doth not only weigh actions and pathes, that is, the whole outward course and tenour of our lives, but he weighs our spirits, that is, the principles from which our actions flow, and by which we are carried on in our pathes; he findes one man to be of a light, of a vain spirit, and another man to be of a proud high spirit, a third to be of a covetous, having, holding spirit; a fourth of an envious spirit, that cannot bear the good of another; and a fifth to be of a revengful spirit, that will do another as much hurt as he can. Again, the Lord by weighing finds out them, whosoever they are, that have a weighty, serious spirit, that have an upright sincere spirit, that have a heavenly gracious spirit; God knowes who they are that have a spirit for the things and wayes of God in the midst of all contradictions of men; and having thus weighed the spirits of men, he disposeth of them and deals with them accordingly. And I may add this to the question in the text, Dost thou know the ballancing of spirits? Surely no, for *thou knowest not the ballancing of the Clouds* (which may be known much easier)

The wonderous works of him which is perfect in knowledge.

Mr. *Broughton* renders, *The miracles of the perfect in knowledge*. As if he had said; the shining of the light in his Cloud, and the ballancing of the Clouds, are to be numbred among the wonderous works of him *that is perfect in knowledge*. *The wonderousness of Gods works* was touched at the 14th verse, I shall not stay upon that here; only mark how *Elihu* describes God by a periphrasis or circumlocution; he doth not say the wonderful works of God, but, *the wonderful works of him*

That

That is perfect in knowledge.

This is a description of God, and such a description as will fit none but God; who hath and who only hath, not only knowledge, but the perfection of it. We need not name God, when we speak of him that is perfect in knowledge, it can be meant of none but him. *Elihu*, at the 4th verse of the former Chapter, said to *Job*, *He that is perfect in knowledge* (meaning himself, as that text was expounded) *is with thee*. In what sense *Elihu* might say of himself, that he was *perfect in knowledge*, was there shewed; and here it must be shewed and confessed, that neither *Elihu* was, nor any, the most knowing, are perfect in knowledge like God, or as God is. The Apostle saith of the best knowers in this world (1 *Cor.* 13. 9.) *We know in part, and we prophesie in part; we behold darkly, as in a glass*. They that have the cleerest eye-sight, the purest intellectuals, know but in part, and see but darkly, which is far from perfectly; therefore, I say, this description *of perfect in knowledge*, hath a peculiar meaning here, proper only to God, as will appear more particularly in opening this Observation from it.

God is not only full of knowledge, but perfect in knowledge; or, *The knowledge of God is perfectly perfect*.

That's perfectly perfect to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken. Such is the knowledge of God; it is impossible to add any thing to it, and it is as impossible to diminish it: God cannot forget or unlearn any thing already known, nor can he know any more things, no nor any thing more, than he already knoweth; therefore he is perfect in knowledge. More distinctly, the knowledge of God is perfect; For,

First, *He knoweth all things*; what-ever is knowable he knoweth. He knowes

First, All things past.

Secondly, He knowes all things present.

Thirdly, He knows all things to come (*Isa.* 46. 10.) *He declareth the end from the beginning*. Now he that knowes all things past, present, or to come, is perfect in knowledge.

Secondly, He is perfect in knowledge, for he knowes all things at once, in one prospect or by one aspect; he doth not know one thing after another, nor one thing by another, he knows all at once.

Thirdly, He is perfect in knowledge, for he knows all things as they are, he doth not know things according to appearance, only or as they are held forth to be. Many will make fair shews, and offer both themselves and their actions as very good, holy, righteous, religious, yet the Lord who seeth through them, seeth them far enough quite through (*Heb.* 4. 12.) *All things are naked and manifest to him*: He seeth to the skin, he seeth through cloaks and vizards, yea, he seeth through skin and all, he lookes into the breast; the breasts of men are to him, as if they were cut open, as the word there imports.

Fourthly, He is perfect in knowledge, *For he knoweth all things in himself*. God doth not go out of himself to search here and there for knowledge and information. We run to this and that book, to this and that man, to fetch in knowledge and yet we know but little when we have done all; but the Lord knowes all things in himself, without search or study.

Fifthly, He knowes all things unerringly; he knoweth them so as there is not the least mistake in his knowledge; that's perfect knowledg. How many errours are there in our knowledge? how much darkness in our light? But *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*.

Sixthly, He knowes all things everlastingly; all things are before him alwayes. Some men quite lose the knowledge of many things which they have known, but all that God knoweth (which is all) abideth in the same clearness and fullness with him for ever.

Seventhly, He knows all things as perfectly as if he had but one thing to know, therefore he is perfect in knowledge. We use to say of a man that hath a knowledge scattered upon many matters, or that is knowing in many Arts, and Trades, and businesses, we say, this man is *something in every thing, and nothing in any thing*; he hath no full knowledge of any one thing, his knowledge being divided upon or among so many things. But such is the perfection of Gods knowledge, that he knowes all things as perfectly as if he had but one thing to know. *To him that is infinite, one and all, is all one*. And from hence (to close up the whole point and this verse) take these five Inferences.

Aliquis in omnibus, nullus in singulis.

First then, *To know, is to be like God, for God is a God of knowledge*. O how unlike God are ignorant persons!

Second-

Secondly, *The more perfect our knowledge is, the more like we are to God*, for he is absolutely perfect in knowledge.

Thirdly, If God be perfect in his knowledge, then, *We need not fear any good which we do, unseen of men, shall be lost*, for God sees and knows it. Though your left hand know not what your right hand doth, yet never fear what you have done shall be buried, for God is perfect in knowledge.

Fourthly, If God be perfect in knowledge, *No evil-doer hath any ground of hope, that any evil he doth can be hid, though done never so much hiddenly, or in the dark*. God is so perfect in knowledge that to him, darkness is no darkness; the darkness and the light to him are both alike.

Fifthly, If God be perfect in knowledge, *Then he fully knows the needs of his people all the world over*; he knowes the state of every one for soul and body. This Christ makes an argument of support in our greatest needs (*Mat.* 6. 32.) *Be not careful what ye shall eat*, &c. be not dispondently careful or fearful about any thing, *for your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of all these things*. Men in straits use to say, if such a friend did but know of our wants, he would help us. Here is comfort to the people of God, he knows their state in general, and their straits in particular, for he is perfect in knowledge. We may rest assured, that he who hath so perfect a knowledge, mingled with perfect compassions, will in due time give us perfect help out of all our straits, and a perfect supply of all our wants.

JOB, Chap. 37. Verſ. 17, 18.

Doſt thou know, &c.

17. *How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the ſouth wind?*

18. *Haſt thou with him ſpread out the skie which is ſtrong, and as a molten looking-glaſs?*

THis context ſheweth yet further, the utter inſufficiency of man to comprehend thoſe wonderful works of God, concerning which *Elihu* ſpake in the cloſe of the 15th verſe. And here we have a conviction of mans inſufficiency two wayes.

Firſt, In reference to his ignorance of what God doth upon him, *verſ.* 17. *Doſt thou know how thy garments are warm*? &c.

Secondly, To his weakneſs, in giving God any aſſiſtance about what he hath done, *verſ.* 18. *Haſt thou, with him, ſpread out the skie which is ſtrong*? &c.

Thus *Elihu* cometh nearer to *Job* than before, not only convincing him of his ignorance in thoſe things which were far above him, but even in thoſe that were about him; not only with reſpect to the Clouds of heaven, but to the cloathes upon his back. And it hath troubled ſome Interpreters upon theſe words, while they conſidered the ſeeming lowneſs and meanneſs of the matter in queſtion, which here *Elihu* puts to *Job*, as alſo, how *Elihu* (having diſcourſed of ſo many wonderful works of God, in the former part of the Chapter, his wonderful works in Lightning, in Thunder, in Rain and Snow, in the motion of the Winds, in ballancing of the Clouds, and in the admirable aſpect and appearances of the Rain-bow; It troubles ſome Interpreters, I ſay, to conſider how *Elihu*, after a large diſcourſe of theſe greater matters) ſhould come at laſt to ſpeak of *Jobs* garments, and the warmth received by them. What cognation or proportion is there between thoſe high and great things above, and the garments which he daily wore? Do theſe deſerve to be reckoned up among the ſecrets of Nature? or, was *Job* ſo ſtupid, that he could not give a reaſon of their warmth? *Knoweſt thou*

Verſ.

Verſ. 17. *How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the South wind?*

So we are to reſume that part of the queſtion out of the former verſe, though not expreſſed here. As there he ſaid expreſly, *Doſt thou know when God diſpoſed them? doſt thou know the ballancing of the Clouds?* So here he ſaith impliedly, *Doſt thou know how thy garments are warm?*

Some make this and the former verſe one entire ſentence, quite leaving out thoſe words, *Doſt thou know*, in the latter part; *Doſt thou know the ballancing of the Clouds, O thou whoſe garments are warm upon thee, when the earth is quieted by the South wind? Haſt thou, with him, ſpread out the Skie, which is ſtrong, and as a molten looking glaſs?* The meaning of which reading is briefly this; *O thou, who canſt not bear thy clothes in a hot day, but art forced to leave thy labour, and retire to thy reſt, when the earth is quieted, the Sun being far aſcended to the South* (that's the time of heat) *Didſt thou, with him, ſpread out the Skie, which is ſtrong as a molten looking-glaſs?* Didſt thou work in the Furnace, or in that fiery heat with God, when he did, as it were, like a mighty Founder, caſt the whole Heavens into that glorious mould, or form, in which they appear and ſeem to move? The words are an alluſion to thoſe Artiſts who work in Mettals, and caſt them into Veſſels of one ſort and ſize or another, for the ſeveral uſes & ſervices of man: Such a thing is the Skie over us, which is therefore here compared to *a molten looking-glaſs*, that is, to a glaſs made of molten metral. Thus, I ſay, ſome read the context as one entire ſentence, and there is a clearneſs in it.

But I ſhall keep to our own reading, and ſo we have two diſtinct queſtions; *Doſt thou know how thy garments are warm? Haſt thou, with him, ſpread out the Skie?*

I begin with the firſt, *Doſt thou know*

How thy garments are warm?

Pro אשר באשר Ut Exod. 34. 18.

Canſt thou give an account of that ſudden change, whence it is that the South wind ceaſing to raiſe ſtormes in the earth, there ſhould preſently ſucceed ſuch fervent heat, that thou art not able to bear thy own ordinary clothes? The text is, *that*, or *how it cometh to paſs, that thy garments are warm.* As if *Elihu* had ſaid, I have

I have dealt with thee about higher and greater matters; I will now put a queſtion to thee which is more familiar, *Canſt thou tell me how thy garments are warm?* Surely if thou art not able to give me a clear reaſon about that, how art thou able to enter into the more reſerved ſecrets of God? tell me, if thou canſt, *How thy*

Garments are warm?

בגד Poſſit, abſtulit, expoliavit, tectum, veſtimentum, veſtire quid vel veſtimentum ſit principium hominis contra Deum peccati, & ejus expiatio. Deo & homini. Brit.

The word which we tranſlate *garments*, hath a very conſiderable ſignificancy in it, coming from a root rendred deceit, falſhood, and a lie. The garments which we wear are both a tegument or covering of our nakedneſs, and a teſtimony of our ſpiritual ſinfulneſs and falſeneſs with the great God. Before man ſinned he wore no garments, nor had he need to wear any, innocency was his clothing; nor was the natural man ever ſo gloriouſly adorned, decked and dreſt, as when he had no garments beſides his innocency. When man prevaricated and dealt falſly with God, when he ſinned and broke the commandment (his nakedneſs appearing and his ſhame) he then got a ſimple covering, ſuch as he could make for himſelf of fig-leaves, till God provided him a covering of ſkins. Garments began with our ſin, *till then* (ſaith *Moſes*, *Gen.* 2.) *the man and the woman were both naked, and were not aſhamed*; but when once man had ſinned, then ſhame came into the world, and then both God and Nature provided garments to cover his ſhame. All this the word imports, that we, through ſin, having loſt our natural garments, our robe of created innocency and integrity, we are conſtrained by ſhame to take up theſe artificial garments or coverings to hide our nakedneſs. It is not unprofitable for us to remember, that the Spirit of God in the Orginal language hath expreſſed our garments by ſuch a word, as leads us to the original of them, our dealing falſly with God and ſinning againſt him.

חמם Incaluit calidum fuit; itaq; Chami nomen vel a calore, vel a migrediente fluxum; Neque ut videtur fine numine, cum quo Chamo contingit Aphrica immodico aſtuh. bovet. Bochart.

'Doſt thou know how thy garments

Are warm?

The word which ſignifieth to heat, or make warm (I note that by the way alſo) was the name of one of the ſons of *Noah*; he had three, called *Sem*, *Ham*, and *Japheth*. *Ham* or *Cham* was that ſon who *ſaw his fathers nakedneſs, and told his two brethren without*, not grievingly, but deridingly, which brought a curſe upon him. This *Cham* had his name from heat; and that portion and part

part of the world which, according to the opinion of the learned, was aſſigned to the poſterity of *Cham*, is one of the hotteſt climates in the world; the inhabitants of thoſe Countries by reaſon of the extream heat of the Sun, being *black*, are called *Blackmores*. And all *Affrica* was called *Ammonia*, either becauſe the Idol of the Sun was worſhipped there, or becauſe the Sun-beams are alwayes hot and fiery upon it. Yet as the word notes that extream heat which cauſeth blackneſs, ſo any moderate heat; *Diſt thou know how thy garments are warm?*

Aphrica Ammonia dicta, cum ob cultum Ammonis i. e. Solis, tum præcipue ob æſtus ſolares quibus expoſita eſt. Fuller Miſc.

From the notation of the word rendred garments,

Obſerve firſt;

When we put on our clothes we ſhould remember our ſin, or,
Our garments are memorials of our ſin.

The covering of our natural nakedneſs is a diſcovery of our ſpiritual; and therefore when we cover our natural nakedneſs we ſhould think of our ſpiritual. 'Tis ſin alone which makes us ſhamefully naked. *Moſes* ſaw the people were naked, when they had made the golden Calf (*Exod.* 32. 25.) not that they had no clothes on them, but they had got a new ſin upon them, and had loſt their former integrity, which was a better ornament than clothing, as alſo the protection of God, which was a better guard or defence than armour. Our garments, which are an occaſion of pride to many, ſhould be an occaſion of humiliation to all. Let us take heed of ſinning in the uſe of garments, ſeeing it was ſin that brought in the uſe of garments. I only mind the reader of it from the notation of the word.

Secondly, What is here ſaid of garments? *Knoweſt thou how thy garments are warm?* That is, warm thee, or, keep thee warm.

Hence note;

Garments are given for warmth.

This's one uſe or ſervice of garments. There is a fourfold uſe of garments.

Firſt, To cover our nakedneſs and hide our ſhame.

Secondly, To diſtinguiſh our ſex, man from woman. The law of *Moſes* forbad the man to wear the womans apparrel, or the woman

man the mans (*Deut. chap.* 22. *verſ.* 5.)

Thirdly, Garments are uſeful for ornament. There are garments of glory and honour, garments to ſet forth the ſtate and condition, as well as the ſex of the perſon wearing them. *Aaron* and his ſons had garments made them by Gods own appointment, *for glory and for beauty* (*Exod.* 28. 2, 40.) The Kings and Princes of the world wear garments becoming their ſtate and Majeſty; and inferiour Magiſtrates have their proper garments, ſuiting their offices and dignity.

Fourthly, (Which is the common uſe of garments, and that which the text ſpeaks of) they are for warmth, to keep out the cold, and to defend us from the injuries and violence of the weather; yet we ſcarce know, or do not fully know, how that comes to paſs.

Hence obſerve, Thirdly;

How our garments warm us is a ſecret, and that they warm us is from the bleſſing of God.

Though there be a natural cauſe of this warmth, yet there is ſome-what of God, yea, much of God in it. The effect of that natural cauſe dependeth wholly upon the concurrence and power of God. That Speech of the Prophet to the *Jewes* newly returned from *Babylon*, and neglecting the Lords houſe, while they too much attended the building of their own, doth fully evince this for truth (*Haggai* 1. 6.) *Ye have ſown much, but bring in little* (naturally they that ſow much, ſhould bring in much, but God can ſtop the influences of the heavens, and the increaſe of the earth, & though the ſeed time be great, the harveſt ſhall be ſmall) again, *ye eat* (*and then* ſure they were ſatisfied; no, ſaith the Prophet, ye eat) *but ye have not enough*; which not only implyeth that they had not enough to eat (though that might be a truth) but, that though they did eat enough, yet there was not a nutritive vertue in the meat, it did not content or ſatisfie the ſtomack & renue their ſtrength: He adds, *ye drink, but are not filled with drink*, which alſo implyeth, not only that they had but a little to drink, but that their drink was not comfortable or thirſt-quenching to them. Laſtly (which is the inſtance of the text) *Ye cloath you, but there is no warmth.* What was the reaſon of all this, That they did eat and had not enough, drink and were not filled, put on cloathing and were not warme? The text

text gives anſwer (v. 9.) *Becauſe I did blow upon it*, or *blow it away*; that is, I ſent out a curſe which blaſted all your creature injoyments, and blowed away the comforts and uſual efficacy of them; ſo that ye had only a ſhel without a kernel, or only skin and bones without the marrow and fatneſs of all, my favour and bleſſing. *That our cloaths warm us, as well as that our meat and drink nouriſh us, is from the bleſſing of God.*

Fourthly, When he ſaith, *Knoweſt thou how thy garments are warm?*

Note;

Man cannot give a full account or reaſon of common things, or of his dayly comforts and enjoyments.

What's more common than for a man to wear garments? what then to find his garments warm upon him, or himſelf warm in his garments? and why a mans cloaths warm him we need not go to enquire of a great Philoſopher, any man, any common man can give or aſſign a cauſe of it. Yet there is ſome-what in it beyond natural cauſes, which few take any notice of, and none can ſufficiently or fully apprehend. Second cauſes produce their effects, the temperature of the air is a cauſe of warmth, and the garments we wear, warm us by exciting and drawing out the congenial warmth within us; yet *Elihu* puts on the queſtion further than that, *Knoweſt thou how thy garments are warm,*

When he quieteth the earth with the South Wind?

Or as ſome tranſlate, *When the earth is quiet by the South Wind.* Mr. *Broughton* reads, *when the land is ſtill.* The original is only *the South, When he quieteth the earth, or when the earth is quiet by the South*; that is, when gentle windes or briezes blow from the Southern parts. The word rendred South or South wind, comes from a root ſignifying an high habitation, becauſe the Sun is higheſt when 'tis in the South, that's its Meridian or high both elevation and habitation. And as when the Sun cometh into the South, 'tis in its higheſt elevation above us, ſo 'tis hotteſt in opperation upon us.

So that, *by the South*, he meaneth the Spring and Summer time, when the Sun makes his Southern progreſs. And becauſe uſually our garments are warmeſt upon us, when the South wind bloweth, there-

Quum tranquilla eſt terra. השקיט *plerumque intranſitivè uſurpatur.* Piſc. *Ameridie.* דרם *Meridies quaſi* דר רום *habitatio olta, quod Sol in ſto plaga altius incedat.*

Quieſcit ab auſtro dum non flagellatur ab auſtro procelloſo. Loc. vide eum.

therefore we render it *by the South wind*. The South wind ſometimes bringeth ſtormes, as was ſhewed at the 9th verſe, *Out of the South cometh the Whirlwind*; but moſtly the South wind bringeth a calm and heat (*Luke* 12. 55.) *When ye ſee* (ſaith Chriſt) *the South wind blow, ye ſay, there will be heat, and it cometh to paſs.* As the North wind uſually blowes cold, ſo the South wind uſually blowes hot, or bringeth heat. Here's a natural cauſe of warmth, *the quieting of the earth by the South wind.*

Terra dicitur per ſynecdochen totius. Pisc.

But is the earth at any time unquiet? If not, why is it ſaid, *he quieteth the earth*? Here by the earth we are to underſtand that part of the Air which is neareſt to the Earth. The Earth taken ſtrictly, is not unquiet, but the Air, in which we (who are upon the Earth) breath, the wind blowing, is unquiet and ſtormy, and when God commands down the ſtorm and ſends a calm he is ſaid to quiet the Earth. So then, by the Earth, we are to underſtand the Air immediately compaſſing us, who dwell and move upon the Earth; and God *quieteth the earth with the South, or South wind*, when we on earth are quiet and quit from troubleſom or tempeſtuous weather.

Hence note;

The natural quietneſs of the Air which we have on Earth, is of God.

When there are no ſtormes nor bluſtring winds in the Air, God ſhews both his power and goodneſs, he then quieteth the Earth; we are to acknowledge God in it, and bleſs him for it, when the Earth is quiet. The diſciples (*Matth.* 8. 26.) being in a great ſtorm at Sea, and fearing the Veſſel would be over-ſet, and that they ſhould periſh in the Waters, Chriſt ſaid to the Sea, *Peace, be ſtill*; *and preſently there was a great calm.* He that quiets the Sea, quiets the Earth too. Chriſt hath calmes or peaceable winds, as well as ſtormes and ſtormy winds at his diſpoſe.

And if the natural quietneſs of the Earth be the work of God, then much more is the civil quietneſs of it. God alone giveth quietneſs among men, he maketh them of one Houſe, and them of one Nation to live quiet. When there are no winds, no tempeſtuous winds blowing in the skie, there may be ſtormes and tempeſts in the Spirits of men; and when there is a tempeſt within, only he *who formes the ſpirit of man within him* (*Zech.* 12. 1.) can

can keep it from breaking out. There are civil ſtorms as well as natural, and the former are much more troubleſome and dangerous than the latter: God raiſeth thoſe ſtormes in judgment. *He ſent an evil Spirit between Abimelech and the men of Sichem* (Judg. 9. 23.) That is, he either gave Satan (the great maiſter of miſ-rule) leave to kindle jealouſies & animoſities between them, or he gave them up to their own evil, envious and malicious ſpirits, which hurried them on to their own vexation and deſtruction: now, as God raiſeth theſe ſtorms in judgment, ſo he either prevents or rebukes them in mercy. It is God who quiets both the ſpirits of Princes in governing, and the ſpirits of people in ſubmitting and obeying. He hath a South wind, ſome benigne and favourable wind, which he breathes upon the children of men, and then they are quiet, and then all's quiet: God being quiet towards, that is well-pleaſed with, and favourable unto man, he quiets all things. If the Lord do but ſay the word, what ſtorm, what tempeſt, what wrath, what rage, what outrage ſoever there is in the earth, all's huſht and ſtill. *Elihu* aſſumed this ſtrongly when he put that challenging queſtion (*Chap.* 34. 29) *When he giveth quietneſs, who then can make trouble; whether againſt a nation or a man only?* Natural quietneſs, much more civil, but above all, ſpiritual quietneſs is of the Lord.

Tranquillus Deus tranquillat omnia.

When there is the greateſt unquietneſs in the Air, and in the affaires of this world, when (as it is ſaid of thoſe times, 2 *Chron.* 15. 5.) *There is no peace to him that goeth out, nor to him that comes in, but great vexations are upon all the inhabitants of the countryes*, men contending with and (like beaſts) tearing one an other, yet even then there may be ſpiritual quietneſs in the ſoul of a believer; he may ſit ſtill and unmoveable, in the favour and love of God, though the earth be moved (yea removed) and the hills carried into the midſt of the Sea. This is eminently the work of God; he can give quietneſs to the ſoul in the midſt of all worldly unquietneſs. Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples, and in them to all believers (*John* 16. 33.) *Theſe things have I ſpoken to you that ye might have peace; in the world ye ſhall have tribulation.* The meaning of Chriſt is not to aſſure his diſciples, that they ſhall have peace in him after they have had tribulation in the world, but that their inward ſpiritual peace ſhall Synchronize or be contemporary with their outward worldly tribulations. To have trou-

ble without, and peace within, at the ſame time, *This is the ſpecial gift of God.* The text tells us, God *quieteth the earth*; and as that gift of natural quietneſs is a mercy, ſo civil quietneſs is a great mercy, and ſpiritual quietneſs, quietneſs of heart and tranquility of mind, eſpecially in the midſt of tribulations, is the greateſt mercy of all. We ſhould pray earneſtly, that God would keep the earth quiet, or quiet the earth, when ever we find it unquiet, by ſome gracious South wind, but above all, that he would quiet our ſpirits by the ſweet breathings of his bleſſed Spirit, that though at any time there ſhould be nothing (which God forbid) but unquietneſs on the earth, yet we may have much quietneſs in our hearts.

Again conſider, the former context told us of ſtormes and tempeſts, of thunder and lightening, of ſnow and rain, driving men from their labour in the field, to their homes and houſes, and the wild beaſts of the fields to their dens and coverts: Now this text ſpeakes of warmth, of calmes, and quietneſs, *He quieteth the earth by the South wind.*

Hence obſerve;

There is a continual viciſſitude in natural things.

As no day of the year is of the ſame continuance or length as to light, ſo very few are of the ſame complexion or temper as to heat and cold, fair or fowl weather, ſtormes or calmes. Now if there be ſuch a viciſſitude in natural things, then do not wonder that there is a viciſſitude in civil things, or in the affaires and conditions of men in this world. If after the faire weather of health and peace, the fowl weather of ſickneſs and trouble come upon us, if after calmes we meet with ſtormes, let us not be troubled. A heathen Poet ſaid, We ſhould not be diffident in a ſtormy day, that we ſhall never have quietneſs, nor ſhould we be confident in a quiet day, that we ſhall never have a ſtorm. *David*, a holy man, was once exceedingly out in both; in his adverſity he ſaid, I ſhall never be eſtabliſhed; that was the ſence of his ſaying, when in *his haſte he ſaid, all men are liars* (Pſal. 116. 11.) *In his proſperity he ſaid, I ſhall never be moved.* The Lords favour had made his mountain ſtand ſtrong, and he began not only to think but conclude it would alwayes ſtand in the ſame ſtrength, till his experience confuted that fancy, *Thou didſt hide thy face, and I was troubled.*

Nemo confidat nimium ſecundis, nemo deſperet meliora laſſis: Res Deus noſtras celeri rotatu turbine verſat. Sen. in Thyeſte.

bled (*Pſal.* 30. 6, 7.) 'Tis good for us to be in expectation of, and preparation for all ſorts of changes, ſeeing all things here below are changable. That great Monarch ſaid (*Dan.* 4. 4.) *I Nebuchadnezzar was at reſt in mine houſe, and flouriſhing in my pallace*, yet preſently he ſaw in a dream, that all his flouriſhing proſperity was but like a dream that paſſeth away; and while thoſe boaſts of an earthly greatneſs and ſettlement were in his mouth (*verſ.* 30.) *Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the houſe of the Kingdome*, &c. *There fell a voyce from Heaven* (verſ. 31.) *ſaying, O King Nebucadnezar, to thee it is ſpoken, the Kingdome is departed from thee.* All ſublunary things, the ſureſt and beſt ſetled eſtates, not only of the men of this world, or of worldly men, but of all men, even of good men, in this world, are as ſubject to changes, as the Moon is, or as the wind and weather.

Laſtly, Whereas, when *Elihu* to the queſtion, *Knoweſt thou how thy garments are warm*, puts this addition, *when he quieteth the earth with the South wind? Job* might ſay, that's an anſwer to the queſtion. If you ask me, how my garments are warm? I anſwer, *By Gods quieting the earth with the South wind.* But here is ſomething more intended; though this be a cauſe of warmth, yet not all the cauſe. It is poſſible for the weather to be warm, and our garments not warm. It was ſhewed before, that God is able to ſuſpend the working or effects of nature: as, through his power a man may be in the fire and yet the fire not burn him (it was ſo with the Three Children in *Daniel*) ſo a man may be in the Sunſhine, and his clothes not warm him. God can ſtay or ſtop the influences and effects of the Sun. The ſhining of the Sun and the quietneſs of the Air are true reaſons of the warmth we feel in our garments, yet not all the reaſon. And therefore *Elihu* would convince *Job* by this queſtion, that if he could not give the whole reaſon of Naturals, much leſs could he of providentials. And as he conviceth him of his inſufficiency, and incompetency to deal and debate with God, by his ignorance about the warmth of his garments that covered him; So in the next verſe, he conviceth him of weakneſs and inability, by calling him to conſider the mighty power and ſelf ſufficiency of God, who alone, without any of his or of any mans aſſiſtance, made and ſpread out the mighty garment, the Skie, which enwraps and covers all men and all things on earth. That's the general import of the following queſtion.

Verſ.

Vers. 18. *Hast thou with him spread out the Sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking-Glasse.*

תרקיע
Pro vitae pro praeterito; hic ex ipsi sententiae loquor. Deus cum fecit ex. pandit coelos cum eos creavisse expandit sese ad Deum. Pisc:

The word which we render, and is here used as a Verb, *to spread*, bears the an allusion to Metals, which are beaten out by an hammer into plates. The Noune signifies the Firmament (*quasi*, i.) because it is an *expansion*, or thing spread out. But the Verb is apelyed to the work of God upon the Earth (*Psal.* 136. 6.) where the Psalmist puts this among the praises of God, or the things for which God is to be prised, *To him who stretched out the earth.* The stretching or spreading out of the Earth is the work of God, as well as the spreading out of the Heaven. The earth is a solid opacous and globous body, yet it is said to be stretched out, because as there is a roundness in the Earth, so a mighty extent and vastness. *To him that stretched out the earth above the waters, to him give thanks.* But though the Earth be also stretched out, yet more properly (of which *Elihu* here speaks) *the Sky. Hast thou with him spread out*

למיחקיט
Celare vel mutare vel aevum significat, unde aliqui conjungunt de coelibus accipiunt. Sicut: *Coeli sic dicti a tenuitate substantiae, et ל valet articulum accusativi casus.* Pisc: *Apud Hebraeos idem significant Shamaim & Schehkim; ita apud Latinos coelum & Aether; interdum aer medius regionis ubi fiunt nubes hoc nomine significatur.* Merc:

The Sky?

The word rendred *Sky*, is put sometimes for the Air, sometimes for the Clouds, is also for the Heavens above both the Clouds and Air. Several of the learned expound it here of the Air, that is, of all below the Moon; others of the Heavens which are above. *Hast thou with him spread out the Sky, or the Heaven?*

This spreading forth of the *Sky* may have a three-fold reference.

First, To the eternal Councel of God before time. As if he had said, *Wast thou with God when he decreed or purposed to spread out the Heavens?*

Secondly, To the work of God in the beginning of time. Wast thou with God, when he did actually spread out the Sky or Firmament in the second dayes work of Creation? (*Gen.* 1. 6.)

Thirdly, (which some insist much upon) to the daily or frequently renewed work of God in ordering and altering the face and motion of the Heavens. As if he had said, *Hast thou with him, when the Sky seeming to be wrapped up in darkness, and rent with thunder and storms; hast thou then with him scattered the darkness, and cleared up the air, making all strong or whole again?* Thus he

he is supposed speaking of a thing often done, even after every storme, not of spreading the Sky at first.

Tu forsitan cum illo fabricatus es colos. Vulg:

The Vulgar Latine renders it ironically, in the second sense; *Thou perhaps didst joyn with him in making the Heavens!* As if *Elihu* had said, *'Tis like, or belike thou wast with him when he made the Heavens; Thou surely wast the Giant or Mighty man who assisted at the spreading out of that vast Canopie. Didst thou poor worm, contribute thy help, or lend thy hand to God in the creation of the World? are we beholding to thee that the Heavens which we behold, compasse in all things with their embraces? you speak of your self at such a rate, as if you had been a partner or coadjutor with God in the Creation, and had with him spread out the Heavens.* Thus the words are a strong Negation; *Thou hadst nothing to do with God when he spread out the Heavens in the work of Creation; why then art thou so busie with God about the works of his Providence, and particularly about his dealing with thy self?* The sum of *Elihu's* argument in this matter may be thus conceived; *If God call not man in other things as a Counsellor or Judge of his actions, nor can be required of any man to do so, nor may any man presume to speak against his ordering the Heavens and Meteors, which yet concern the great good or hurt of thousands; then it must needs be a very unequall thing that any one man should expect of God a reason of his particular dealing with him, but patiently submit unto it, not at all questioning, either his justice or his goodness, how greatly and grievously soever he is afflicted.*

First, Taking the Heavens, either strictly, or, as many do, synecdochecally, a part being put for the whole work of Creation,

Note;
God made the world;

He spread the Heavens, and stretched out the Earth, Heaven and Earth are the work of his hands.

Secondly, *God had no partner in his work. Hast thou with him spread out the Sky?* The Scripture is much in exalting the honour of God, as the sole Agent and Efficient in setting up the frame of the World, (*Isa* 44. 24.) *Thus saith the Lord, I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the Heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the Earth by my self.* The Prophet brings in God speaking thus, to comfort his ancient people when they saw

ſaw none to help them. *What cannot God do alone, who ſtretcheth out the Heavens alone? Cannot he bring back the Church of the* Jews *out of* Babylon *alone, who ſtretcheth out the Heavens alone? cannot he raiſe up* Cyrus *for his Shepherd, and move him to make Proclamation for their return, when there was none to move him about it? He fruſtrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh Diviners mad.* Thoſe lying Diviners ſaid, *the Jews* were faſt enough for coming out, but God fruſtrated their tokens, and made them mad at their diſappointments. Now as this may exceedingly comfort and encourage the people of God all the world over in their greateſt ſtraits, that God made the world, and ſpread out the Sky alone, ſo it doth exceedingly advance the power and glory of God. If a man have but a great Carpet or Coverlet to unfold, he muſt call in the help of two or three to ſpread it and hold it up, one man cannot do it alone: But God ſpread out the Heaven, that mighty Canopie of the Heavens alone. And his ſpreading of it was the making of it; The mighty God by one act gave the Sky both its being and its forme: And all this he did without either Counſellor or Coadjutor. No man ever did any very great thing in the world, but it was either by the help of other mens heads in contriving, or by the help of their hands in effecting. To be a ſole-Agent of Great things, is the ſole-priviledge of the Great God. And ſurely if the Lord God had no aſſiſtant in the great work of Creation, he needs no aſſiſtance in his greateſt works of Providence. He who made the world without help, can do what he pleaſeth in the world without help. *Our help* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt 124. 8.) *is in the name of the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth*; but the Maker of Heaven and of Earth, fetcheth all his help from his own Name.

Elihu having magnified the power of God in ſpreading out the Sky, takes occaſion to give us a deſcription of the Sky, *Haſt thou with him ſpread out the Sky*

Which is ſtrong, and as a molten Looking-Glaſſe?

We have here two things conſiderable in the Sky; Firſt, the ſtrength of it; Secondly, the clearneſs of it. But is the Sky ſtrong? that may be thought an improper and incongruous Epithete: The Sky ſeemeth to be a weak thing, and the Air will ſcarce bear a feather; yet ſaith he, *Haſt thou with him ſpread out the Sky which is*

ſtrong? How are the Heavens or Sky ſtrong? Philoſophers and Interpreters upon this place, have largely diſcourſed the matter of the Heavens, which to our ſence are a very thinn ſubſtance, and therefore ſeem to have little ſtrength in them.

I anſwer, Though to ſenſe and view the Sky or Heavens ſeem to have little ſtrength in them, yet indeed their ſtrength is beyond that of Rocks and Mountains. The learned Languages, both Greek and Latine, expreſſe the Sky by words which properly ſignifie *ſtrength* and *firmneſs*; and we following the Latine word commonly call it in our Engliſh tongue, *The Firmament*, as much as to ſay, *a firme thing*. When the Apoſtle would ſet forth the ſtedineſs (or as we tranſlate) the ſtedfaſtneſs of the faith of the *Coloſſians*, he makes uſe of this word (στερέωμα *Chap.* 2. 5.) As if he had ſaid, I rejoyce to behold *the firmament of your faith*, or that your faith is as firme as the Firmament. Surely then the Sky or Firmament is very ſtrong, elſe the ſtrength of faith (which being ſtrong, is the ſtrongeſt thing, both actively and paſſively, in the world) had never been expreſſed by it. The Heavens are ſaid to be ſtrong (as faith is) becauſe of their laſtingneſs and duration. The Angels are pure Spirits, they are purer and of a more ſpiritual ſubſtance than the Sky or Heavens, yet they are ſtrong, ſo ſtrong and powerfull, that they are called *Powers*; their ſtrength is not a corporal ſtrength of fleſh and bone, as ours, and that of beaſts is, nor is it a ſtrength by compactneſs of earthy parts, as that of Stones and Metals is, but 'tis a ſtrength of laſtingneſs and activity ariſing from their ſpiritualneſs. Thus the Sky, eſpecially taking it for the Heavens above the air, is pure, there is a ſpiritualneſs in its nature, and ſo a ſtrength of laſtingneſs in it, beyond that of any earthly or elementary body. The Heavens are not made up of contrary qualities, as elementary bodies are: In them heat and coldneſs, moyſture and dineſs, are mingled together, and theſe contending with each other, at laſt ſubdue each other; whence all elementary bodies become weak and corruptible. The Heavens have ſome cognation with elementary bodyes, yet without the contrariety of active qualities. Heaven is like the Element of the Earth, in regard of firmneſs and ſolidity; it is like the water, in regard of its moveableneſs; it is like the air, in regard of its pellucidneſs or clearneſs; it is like the fire, with reſpect to its activeneſs. Heaven ſhines, yet 'tis without heat; 'tis ſolid, yet with-

Firmitas tribuitur cœlo propter immutabilitatem, unde Septuaginta dicunt στερέωμα *Latini Firmamentum.*

מצק *fuſile a* יצק *fundere liqui facere, non a* צוק *coarctare.* Merc.

without dryneſs; 'tis compact, yet without moyſtneſs; 'tis diaphanous and pellucid, yet without poſes, or thoſe ſmall and unſenſible holes, whereby ſweat and vapours paſs out of the body. So then the Scripture calls Heaven ſtrong or firme, not as groſſe bodyes are called firme and ſtrong, but becauſe of its perpetual conſiſtency and (as to nature) indiſſolubility; which doth the more highly advance and commend the power of God, who hath given it a ſtrength and firmneſs, beyond that of Rocks and Adamants: For how fluid and moveable ſoever the Heavens are to view, yet they are the moſt ſtrong and durable part of the whole Creation. *Haſt thou with him ſpread out the Sky which is ſtrong,*

And as a molten Looking-Glaſſe.

Some read theſe words as an entire ſentence, *Which is ſtrong as a molten Looking-Glaſſe.* So Mr *Broughton, Couldſt thou make a Firmament with him of the Air, ſetled as Glaſſe molten?* We put it diſtinctly in two parts, *which is ſtrong, and as a molten Looking-Glaſſe.* Some of the old Poets uſed a like Epithete concerning Heaven, they called it, *The Brazen Heaven.* What the Lord threatens as a judicial affliction (*Deut.* 28. 23.) *The Heaven that is over thine head ſhall be Braſſe*, that Heaven reſembles in its natural conſtitution, 'tis like Braſſe, or like a molten Looking-Glaſſe, by reaſon of its ſhining brightneſs. That which we commonly call Glaſs, or a Looking-Glaſs is molten: of which we read (*Exod* 38. 8.) *Moſes made the Brazen Laver of the Looking-Glaſſes of the Women.* The godly women among the *Jewes* made a better uſe of their Looking-Glaſſes, than to dreſs themſelves by, they offered them to the ſervice of God in the Tabernacle.

Poetæ veteres χαλκεονέρανον appellarunt.

One of the Jewiſh Doctors warns us to conſider that the word which we render a *Looking-Glaſſe*, may be taken for a *look*, or for the *appearance of a thing*: As if he had ſaid, The Heavens are not only ſtrong, but cleare, looking like, or being, o look on, like a thing that is molten. Glaſſe is a diaphanous ſplendid body, we may ſee through it, or ſee the repreſentation of objects in it. Thus the Heavens are ſtrong as ſteele, and cleare *as a molten Looking-Glaſſe.*

ראה *Eſt videre; inde viſus & ſpeculum.* Rab: Kimhi in lib: rad:

Hence obſerve;

Firſt, *The Heavens are durable, they are ſtrong.*

Secondly,

Secondly, *The Heavens are tranſparent, they are as a Looking Glaſſe.*

From this latter we may infer,

There is much to be ſeen in the Heavens;

They are a Looking-Glaſſe which repreſent many things to us. It hath been ſaid, The whole world is a Looking Glaſſe, every Age we live in is a Looking-Glaſſe, in which many, both things and perſons, are diſcovered: I may ſay much more, the Heavens are a Looking Glaſſe, wherein we may behold much of God, and much of our ſelves. And becauſe the Heavens are called a Looking-Glaſſe, it ſhould mind us to look upon the Heavens; they may mind us,

Seculum ſpeculum.

Firſt, What God is, who hath made the Heavens (*Pſal.* 19. 1.) *The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his handy work.* We may ſee God by the Heavens;

Firſt, In his nature, that he is pure and holy. He that hath made ſuch a pure thing as the Heaven is, how pure is he! There is no dirt in the Sky, no filth in the Heavens, no uncleanneſs there; the duſt or filth of this world can get but a little into the air, it cannot reach the Heavens. The purity of God is ſuch as may ſhame the purity of the Heavens, and make them bluſh; though the Heavens are the pureſt part of the world, yet comparatively to God they are impure. This *Eliphaz* aſſerts expreſly (*Chap.* 15. 15.) *Behold, he putteth no truſt in his Saints, yea, the Heavens are not clean in his ſight. Biload* puts it yet further (*Chap.* 26. 5.) *Yea, the Starrs* (which are the moſt pure and reſplendent part of the Heavens) *are not pure in his ſight.*

Secondly, The Heavens are a Glaſſe, wherein we may behold the power of God. How unconceiveable is his power, who hath made ſuch a Canopie, and ſpread it over the heads of all Creatures! And if the viſible Heavens are ſo glorious, what is the Heaven of Heavens! The Heaven which we ſee, is but the pavement of that which is unſeen. God hath made ſuch a Ceeling for this Houſe below, as never needed mending, or repaire, he hath ſet ſuch a Roof upon it as abides all weathers.

Thirdly, We may ſee in this Glaſs the wiſdome of God, his wonderfull wiſdome in contriving and fitting ſuch a beautiful

 Roof

roof for this great Houſe, the World? We admire the skill and wiſdome of Architects in ſome peices of their work. O the wiſdome of God in this!

Fourthly, We may ſee in the Heavens the unchangeableneſs of God. If he hath made the Heavens of ſuch a laſting nature, that they have continued many thouſand years without alteration; ſurely then he himſelf hath continued and will continue for ever without change, as he is at this day. The unchangeableneſs of God infinitely exceeds that of the Heavens. We find the Spirit of God by holy *David* infinitely preferring the God of Heaven, before the Heavens of God, in his unchangeableneſs (*Pſal.* 102. 26, 27.) *Of old haſt thou laid the foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are the work of thy hands; they ſhall periſh, but thou ſhalt endure; yea, all of them ſhall wax old like a garment, as a veſture ſhalt thou change them, and they ſhall be changed: but thou art the ſame.* The Heavens have but a ſhadow of unchangeableneſs, compared with God, *With whom is no variableneſs nor ſhadow of changing.*

Fifthly, In this Glaſs of the Heavens we may look upon or contemplate the wonderfull goodneſs of God to the ſons of men, (*Pſal.* 8. 3.) *When I conſider the Heavens, the work of thy fingers, the Moon, and the Stars, which thou haſt ordained: What is man that thou art mindfull of him? and the ſon of man that thou viſiteſt him?* When-ever we look on the Heavens, it ſhould mind us of the mercy and goodneſs of God to man two wayes. Firſt, in making the Heavens for our uſe, while he dwels on the Earth. Secondly, in that he hath prepared and provided him ſuch a dwelling houſe, when he ſhall leave this Earth (2 *Cor.* 5. 1.) *We know that if the earthly houſe of this Tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.*

Again, The Heavens are a Looking-Glaſs, wherein we may behold our ſelves.

Firſt, We may behold our weakneſs and impurity, and ſo our unlikeneſs to the Heavens, much more to the God of Heaven. When oppoſites are ſet one by over against the other, they illuſtrate each other. In the ſpotleſs Heavens, we may ſee our ſpots; The pure Heavens may ſhew us our impurity.

Secondly, As in the Heavens we may ſee what we are, ſo what we

we ſhould be. The purity of the Heavens tells us we ſhould be pure, they tell us we ſhould be heavenly-minded, that is, ſet our minds chiefly upon heavenly things; yea, that our minds ſhould be like the Heavens, pure and ſpotleſs. It is ſaid of the Church (*Cant.* 6. 10.) *Who is this that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun?* Such, in a qualified ſenſe, are all the parts and true members of the Church. Shall a man ſay, he hopes for an inheritance in the Heavens, when his mind is earthly, or when he minds only earthly things? Worldly men are not only earthly-minded, but their minds are earth, and themſelves are called earth (*Jer.* 22. 29. and *Rev.* 12. 16.) Surely then they are earthly. On the other hand, godly men ſhould not only mind heavenly things, but be a Heaven before they come to Heaven. The Church on Earth is called Heaven (*Heb.* 12. 26.) *Yet once more I ſhake not the Earth only, but alſo Heaven*; that is, the Church ſtate. St *John* ſaith (*Rev.* 12. 7.) *There was war in Heaven*: But is there war in Heaven? is it not all peace and joy there? How then ſaith that Scripture, *There was war in Heaven?* By Heaven there he means the Church on earth, which is called Heaven; Firſt, becauſe there is not a more lively repreſentation or reſemblance of the higheſt Heavens (which is the habitation of Gods holineſs, and of his glory) than the Church here below, which is a company of Saints and faithfull ones. Secondly, becauſe the Church, while on Earth, hath more to do in Heaven, and for Heaven, then in or for the Earth; and that in three reſpects.

Firſt, Her birth is from Heaven, being born of God.

Secondly, Her traffick is in and for Heaven. The Apoſtle ſaith of himſelf, and of all ſuch as are truly the Church of God (*Phil.* 3. 20.) *Our converſation is in Heaven*; our trade is in Heaven. Though we have buſineſs on Earth, yet that which is our buſineſs indeed is in Heaven. The Church hath more to do in Heaven than on Earth; her paines and labours, her cares and endeavours are more for heavenly than for earthly things. They that beſtow moſt of their labour upon earthly things, are earthly. In all things we ought to be heavenly, and in every thing we do, we ought to be doing for Heaven.

Thirdly, Becauſe her Head and her Inheritance is in Heaven.

Here

Here ſhe is a ſtranger, there is her home; nor is ſhe ever truly at home, till ſhe comes thither.

Thus as Heaven is a Glaſs, wherein we may ſee what we ought to be now; we ſhould labour to be pure, millian, and of an unvariable temper, as the Heavens are; ſo what we ſhall be, and ſhall have hereafter: 'Tis ſuch a Glaſs as God hath made for us to behold our ſelves in, and above all to behold himſelf, his bleſſed ſelf in. Let us dreſſe our ſelves by this Glaſſe every day.

Let it not ſatisfie us to look upon the Heavens, that we may ſee and be taken with their own beauty and excellency, as Philoſophers do in their diſcourſes of Heaven; but let us ſee God in them, let us ſee Grace and Glory in them. There is ſo little of God in the diſcourſes of Philoſophers (ſaith one) that they are colder than the Froſt and Snow, of which they often diſcourſe. But let us ſee God in this Looking-Glaſs of the Heavens, and therein alſo let us ſee our ſelves, and learn to be fitting and preparing our ſelves for heavenly joyes and enjoyments. We have never looked well upon or in this Glaſs, till we have mended our dreſſe, and are become better and more beautifull by looking in it.

JOB,

JOB, Chap. 37. Verſ. 19, 20.

19. *Teach us what we ſhall ſay unto him, for we cannot order our ſpeech by reaſon of darkneſs.*

20. *Shall it be told him that I ſpeak? if a man ſpeak, ſurely he ſhall be ſwallowed up.*

Elihu having (in the former part of the Chapter) rehearſed many of the wonderful works of God in natural things, beyond his reach, bids *Job* reach them if he could, or, he invites *Job*, if he could, to give him ſome direction, what account to give unto God about them, profeſſing that he himſelf knew not, could not tell what to ſay; telling him alſo, that he was much aſſured no man elſe could; *If a man ſpeak, ſurely he ſhall be ſwallowed up.*

As if *Elihu* had ſaid, *Now thou haſt heard the works of God thus at large diſcourſed, I appeal to thee, if any man know how to diſpute or fault his doings; as for our parts, we cannot tell what to alledge or reply againſt them, becauſe we cannot ſee the depth of his wiſdom, nor reach the bottom of his adminiſtrations.* And ſo the whole context may contain an argument from the leſs to the greater. If we are ignorant of, or can hardly apprehend theſe natural things, how much more muſt we be ignorant of, and unable to ſearch into the ſecrets and reſerved caſes of divine Providence? *We know little of our ſelves, how much leſs of God!* That's the generall ſcope and intendment of theſe two verſes.

Verſ. 19. *Teach us what we ſhall ſay, for we cannot order our ſpeech by reaſon of darkneſs.*

There is a twofold interpretation of the former part of this 19th verſe; ſome expounding it as a ſerious motion, or a motion in good earneſt made by *Elihu* in his own name, or in the name of thoſe about him, that *Job* would give them counſel in that matter, *Teach us, ſhew us what we ſhall ſay unto him*; as for our parts, we are compaſſed about with ſo much darkneſs, that we know not what to ſay further, or more than we have already about theſe matters; from whence he would infer or intimate, that much leſs did he or they about him, know what to ſay more of *Jobs* matters,

or

or of the dealings of God with him. Thus, according to this interpretation, *Elihu* ſeemeth to proſecute what he ſpake formerly; *I deſire to juſtifie thee*, I would gladly undertake the patronage of thy cauſe, or find out a way how to acquit thee of all thoſe raſh ſpeeches, and impatient complaints, that proceeded from thee; but as yet, for my part, I ſee not how to do it, and therefore, if thou doſt, pray ſhew me.

Irriſorie ſubdit dicens, oſtende nobis, &c. Aquin.

Secondly, And that more generally, theſe words are expounded, as if in them *Elihu* had put a kind of ſlight or ſcorn upon *Job*, triumphing and inſulting over him, as his inferiour in diſputation. As if he had ſaid, *Go to now, O Job, ſeeing thou thinkeſt thy ſelf ſo wiſe and juſt, that thou art able to plead and debate thy cauſe with God himſelf; teach us, who are nothing to thee, and who ingeniouſly confeſs our ſelves ignorant, how to reſolve thoſe queſtions lately propoſed to thy conſideration: We are overwhelmed with deep darkneſs, and have no hope to diſpel it, or get out of it, unleſs thou canſt give us light.* Thus, I ſay, the words are generally expounded, as ſpoken with a kind of ſtomack, or carrying in them the ſenſe of a ſecret ſubſannation; as if *Job* were more able to ſee than they all that were about him, as if they were deaf and blind, and he alone had the wit. Now you that are ſo great a Maſter, and ſo ready a Teacher, come ſhew us, play the Maſter, and act the Tutors part, teach us what we ſhall ſay to him.

Age magiſtrum

But I rather adhere to the former expoſition, taking the words as a plain motion, though not altogether without a mixture of reproof. *Teach us what we ſhall ſay*; If thou wouldeſt have us ſay any thing in thy cauſe, give us inſtruction. An Advocate, when his Clyant comes for counſel, tells him, if you would have me plead your cauſe give me inſtructions, open your caſe to me, that I may plead it for you; thus here, *teach us, ſhew us what we ſhall ſay*, give us directions if thou art able. *Job* had ſaid (*Chap.* 23. 4.) *He would order his cauſe before God, and fill his mouth with arguments*; pray, ſaith *Elihu*, give us ſome of thoſe arguments now; as for me, and thoſe that are with me, we are utterly unprovided what arguments to uſe, how to argue, how to plead any thing for the juſtification of thy ſpeeches and behaviour in thy affliction; *Therefore teach us what we ſhall ſay unto him.*

The text is, *make us to know*. Teaching makes men knowing; he that teacheth another endeavours to conveigh knowledge into him;

him; and therefore the ſame word may very well ſignifie, *to teach and make to know*, foraſmuch as the tendency of teaching is for the beginning or for the encreaſing of knowledge. *Teach us*

What we ſhall ſay unto him;

That is, *to the Almighty*. God is the Antecedent to this Relative *he*, what ſhall we ſay to God in thy defence? We would do our beſt, our utmoſt, if we knew how. There are two ſorts of perſons who call for teaching.

First, Uſually they deſire others to teach them, who are convinced or ſenſible of their own ignorance, and would be delivered from or brought out of it. Thus *David* prayed that God would teach him, that he would *teach him his Statutes* (*Pſal.* 119. 33, 66.) The ſick man in the 34th Chapter of this Book is repreſented humbly craving this favour (*verſ.* 32.) *That which I ſee not teach thou me.* Here's the true genius and deſire of a learner, he would be taught, he is convinced that he wants knowledge very much or is very ignorant, and therefore he would be taught. But,

Secondly, Some call upon others to teach them, meerly to convince them of their ignorance and inability to teach them, or to ſhew that it is a great preſumption in them to pretend to the knowledge of ſuch things as they call upon them to teach. In this latter ſenſe we are to underſtand this deſire or motion of *Elihu*, ſaying to *Job*, *Teach us what we ſhall ſay unto him*, that is, what defence we ſhall make for thee, or what for our ſelves, if we were in thy caſe, or had ſuch a mind to plead with God, as thou haſt expreſt more than once. *Elihu* moves *Job* to teach them, knowing that he was not able to teach them, or to let him know that he had not knowledge enough to teach them in that matter. *Teach us what we ſhall ſay unto him,*

For we cannot order our ſpeech by reaſon of darkneſs. *A ſtrict tenebrarum.* Heb.

In this latter part of the verſe *Elihu* gives *Job* a reaſon why he and his fellows would (though they knew he could not teach them) be taught by him. As if he had ſaid, we plainly and clearly acknowledge *that we are in the dark* about theſe matters, and

Cannot order our ſpeech by reaſon of darkneſs.

The word here rendred to *order*, may have a double alluſion;
Firſt, To a Military;
Secondly, To a Judiciary ordering.

It is an alluſion to the Military ordering of an Army or Camp, becauſe words in ſpeech ought to be put into good order, to be duely ranked and drawn out as ſouldiers to battel.

They alſo that have to do in Cauſes and Courts of Juſtice ought to order their words aright, they muſt not ſpeak at random, or what comes next, but they muſt weigh the plea they make, and put every thing in its due place. Thus ſaith *Elihu* here, *We cannot order our ſpeech*, we cannot tell how to draw up our reaſons, we are over-matcht in this buſineſs, we know not how to plead before God in thy caſe, nor what defence to make for thee; thou pretendeſt to be able to contend with him, but we are not, *we cannot order our ſpeech*. Why not?

By reaſon of darkneſs.

It is darkneſs that uſually hinders the putting of things in order: Darkneſs in the Air doth ſo, much more darkneſs of the Underſtanding. There muſt be light of one kind or other for the ordering of every matter. Where darkneſs is there muſt needs be confuſion: and therefore *Elihu* gives a very good account, why they could not order their ſpeech, when he ſaith, *We cannot do it by reaſon of darkneſs*. What darkneſs? there is a twofold darkneſs,

Firſt, There is darkneſs proper, or natural. Once there was darkneſs, becauſe light was not come or created; of that *Moſes* ſpeaks (*Gen.* 1. 3, 4.) *Darkneſs was upon the face of the deep*. Now there is darkneſs every night, cauſed by the departure of light, or the going down of the Sun; as alſo ſometimes by the Eclipſe of the Sun (*Matth.* 27. 45.) *There was darkneſs over all the land*, when Chriſt was crucified. It was not this kind of darkneſs, that hindred *Elihu* from ordering his ſpeech; for a man may order his ſpeech though he have neither Sun-light nor Candle-light; a man needs no other light, but that of Reaſon and Underſtanding to order his ſpeech by.

Secondly, Darkneſs in Scripture is taken improperly and metaphorically; and ſo we are to underſtand it here, *We cannot order our ſpeech by reaſon of darkneſs*. And this darkneſs, which I call improper or metaphorical, is of ſeveral kinds.

Firſt, Trouble and ſorrow in Scripture language are called darkneſs (*Pſal.* 18. 28.) *Thou, O Lord, wilt lighten my darkneſs*, that is, thou wilt bring me out of a ſorrowful, into a joyful ſtate. (*Joel.* 2. 2.) *It is a day of darkneſs*; what is that? *a day of trouble and affliction*. Hence the ſtate of the damned in Hell is called *darkneſs*, yea, *utter darkneſs* (*Matth.* 22. 13.) becauſe it is a ſtate of ſorrow, even of everlaſting ſorrows. This darkneſs of ſorrow and trouble will hinder a man very much from ordering his ſpeech. He that is compaſſed about with, eſpecially if diſcompoſed by ſorrow, is unfit to ſpeak before men of underſtanding; yet, I conceive, this was not the darkneſs here meant.

Secondly, Darkneſs in Scripture notes the ſtate of a natural man, as unregenerate and without faith. *Ye were ſometimes darkneſs*, ſaith the Apoſtle (*Eph.* 5. 8.) that is, ye were ſometimes unconverted, or in a ſtate of nature, which is called darkneſs, not only there, but often elſewhere (1 *Theſſ.* 5. 4.) *Brethren, ye are not in darkneſs*, that is, ye are not in a ſinful condition, grace hath ſhined unto you, yea, it hath ſhined into you, or as the Apoſtle ſpeaks (2 *Cor.* 4. 6.) *it hath ſhined in your hearts, to give you the light of the knowledg of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*; he it was who came on purpoſe into the world, as to give life to them that were dead, ſo *to give light to them that ſit in darkneſs* (Luk. 79.) 'Tis a truth alſo that this kind of darkneſs doth exceedingly hinder a man in ſpeaking, eſpecially when ſome things are to be ſpoken. He that is in the darkneſs of a natural condition, will be to ſeek (as we ſay) or knoweth not how to order his ſpeech before God, in any ſpiritual matter. Yet, neither is this here meant; for *Elihu* was not a man in this kind of darkneſs, he was doubtleſs a godly man, a man that had much acquaintance with, and in the things of God: Therefore it was not becauſe of this darkneſs that he could not order his ſpeech before God.

Thirdly, Darkneſs is put for the deſerted eſtate of a godly man (*Iſaiah.* 50. 10.) *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his ſervant* (he that doth ſo is ſurely a godly man, or in the ſtate of grace: who is there of this ſort among you) *that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light*, God having with-drawn the light of his countenance from him? Now 'tis a very great truth

(and sadly experienced by some) that this kind of darkness doth exceedingly hinder a man *from ordering his speech before God.* A poor soul, that is walking in the darkness of a spiritual, troubled, deserted state, that is bewildred with fear and doubt about the favour of God to him, and his acceptance with him, knoweth not what to do or say before God, he knoweth not how to order his speech in prayer or discourse. This darkness hindereth us mightily in ordering our speech before God. Yet I conclude, that neither is this the darkness here understood, which is a darkness following upon the present going down or setting of the *Sun of Righteousness* upon the soul, who was himself once thus grievously benighted, when nayled to the Cross, he cryed out, *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.*

Fourthly, Darkness is taken for that remaining ignorance or imperfection of knowledge which abides even in the best, in the holiest of men after their conversion, while on this side Heaven. This ignorance is darkness (1 *Cor.* 13. 9.) and this is that darkness which *Elihu* here intends, when he saith, *we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.* As if he had said, Though I, and they with me, are not altogether rude nor ignorant of God and his wayes; though we have received (through grace) a competency of divine light, to guide us through this world, yet we are sensible of so much dimness and darkness, that we cannot *order our speech before God*, nor direct our selves what to say for thee, as thou hast handled the matter.

Further, The darkness that (as *Elihu* saith) hindereth man in ordering his speech before God, may be taken, not only for the darkness of the man, or of the person speaking, as hath been shewed already, but also for the darkness of the matter, or of the things about which he is called or occasioned to speak. As there is a darkness of the Subject, so a darkness of the object, which *David* thus expresseth (*Psal.* 49 4.) *I will utter dark sayings upon the harp*: And again (*Psal.* 78. 2.) *I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old.* A parable is a dark saying, that is, a mysterious saying, a sentence not obvious to every understanding; there is a secret in parables (*Prov.* 1. 5, 6.) *A man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels, to understand a proverb* (or parable) *and the interpretation, the words of the wise and their dark sayings.* When *Elihu* saith, *We cannot order our speech by reason*

reason of darkness, we may take it in this latter sense, as well as in the former; for as there is, and will be, some mixture of darkness with light in our minds, till we come to that *inheritance of the Saints in light* (*Col.* 1. 12.) so there may be a darkness in the matter to be spoken of. Some truths are so mysterious, secret and hidden, they are so obscure, or lye so deep, that they are, by us, even unsearchable and unperceivable; and then we cannot order our speech about them by reason of their darkness, though possibly our selves may have attained some good measure of light. And as there are many things in the doctrine of Faith very dark to us, so also in those dealings of God with us, which reach our sense; we see and feel that which we know not how to give a reason or an account of. The light of the Sun is clear and shines into our eyes, yet there is a difficulty to understand the nature of Light. We are in the dark, even about Light it self; how much more are we in the dark about the hidden and dark works of God, in many of his dispensations towards the children of men! And surely then, *we cannot order our speech* (concerning them) *by reason of darkness.*

Hence note;

First (taking darkness in the improper sence) *Ignorance is darkness.*

If that ignorance which remaineth after conversion be darkness, then surely much more is that which dwelleth in a natural man unconverted. Knowledge is the light of the mind: The understanding, if furnished with knowledge, is as the Sun in the Firmament; but a man who hath no knowledge nor understanding, is like the Air without the Sun, nothing but darkness; and so much ignorance as abideth in any man, so much darkness abideth in him. The natural man is altogether ignorant, as to the understanding of spiritual things spiritually, that is, savingly, and therefore he (as to them) is altogether darkness, he is (as *Job* spake in another case of a land, *Chap.* 10. 22.) *a man of darkness, as darkness it self, and in him the light is as darkness*; he cannot see by reason of darkness, nor can he speak, to purpose, of the things of God, though he may speak very wisely about the things of the world, *by reason of darkness*, or because his very Reason (which is the natural light of man) is darkened.

There are six things, which a natural man, by reason of this darkness, cannot see to order, neither his speech nor his person about.

First,

Firſt, He cannot ſee what he ſhould be, and what he is commanded to be, holy, juſt and righteous.

Secondly, He cannot ſee what he ſhould do, or is commanded to do, juſt and righteous things.

Thirdly, By reaſon of this darkneſs he cannot ſee, what he ought not to do, or is commanded not to do, unjuſt, evil and unrighteous things. He hath not a diſcerning about either the affirmative or the negative part of divine commandments; and hence it comes to paſs, that as he doth not what he ought, ſo he doth what he ought not.

Fourthly, By reaſon of this darkneſs, it muſt needs be, that he cannot ſee what he hath done againſt the commandment, his ſins of commiſſion, nor what he hath neglected to do according to the commandment, his ſins of Omiſſion.

Fifthly, If ſo, he cannot ſee what he ought to repent of, and turn from. Some repent not of that which they ſee to be evill, but no man can repent of that, in particular, which he ſee's not to be evill. I grant every godly man makes it his dayly work, to repent of his unknown ſins, as well as of thoſe which he knows. (*Pſal.* 19. 12.) *Who can underſtand his errours?* that is, all the errours, wanderings and miſtakes of his life; and therefore *David* prayed in the cloſe of the verſe, *cleanſe thou me from ſecrets faults*, that is, from thoſe faults and failings which are ſecrets to me, or which I know not of. But though a man may truly repent of his unknown ſins, yet no man repents of ſin, who doth not know ſin.

Sixthly, By reaſon of darkneſs a man doth not ſee, nor knowes he the things that he hopes for; he poſſibly hath great hopes of heaven, or of eternal life, yet knowes not in any meaſure what they are indeed, nor how to order his ſpeech about either, becauſe he is in darkneſs. So then, the ſtate of an unregenerate perſon is darkneſs, and therefore he cannot ſee at all: and much darkneſs may remain in a perſon regenerate, and therefore he cannot ſee all (*1 John* 1. 5.) *God is light, and in him there is no darkneſs at all*; but though the people of God have light and are light, yet in them there is darkneſs. And becauſe whereſoever ignorance is, there is darkneſs, according to the degree of that ignorance, we may take theſe Inferences from it.

Firſt, *To be in an ignorant condition is to be in a very uncertain condition*, for ſuch are in darkneſs. Now, as Chriſt ſpeaketh (*John* 12. 35.) *He that walketh in darkneſs knoweth not whither he goeth.* In what an uncertain condition is that man who is dayly going, yet knows not whether he goeth? whether he be going right or wrong, whether he be going for his good or for his hurt, whether he be going homeward or from home, whether he be going to a pallace or a priſon, whether to life or death, to heaven or hell. Thus 'tis with a man in darkneſs, and proportionable to the darkneſs that is in any man, is the uncertainty of that mans condition; and therefore till a man be got out of this darkneſs of ignorance, he is in a very uncertain condition, he knoweth not whither he is going, though he be certainly going downward, and that to deſtruction.

Secondly, If ignorance be darkneſs, in what degree ſoever it is, then, *ignorance is very dangerous*. Darkneſs ſubjects us to danger. As a man is in an uncertain condition while he is in darkneſs, ſo in a dangerous condition. *If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch.* O how dangerous is the ſtate of that man who is altogether in darkneſs! We find theſe two put together (*Iſa.* 9. 2. repeated *Matth.* 4. 16.) *To them that ſate in darkneſs, and in the valley of the ſhadow of death, is light riſen up.* How near are they to danger, who are even in the valley of the ſhadow of death? Thus 'tis with thoſe that are in a ſtate of darkneſs; and ſo far as darkneſs is in any man, he is in danger to be miſled, and to erre both in opinion and practiſe. Woe to thoſe who, when light is come into the world ſhall be found loving darkneſs rather than light (*Joh.* 3. 19.) theſe are in the greateſt danger, the danger of condemnation, yea, this is *the condemnation*.

Thirdly, To be in an ignorant condition, is to be in a *very uncomfortable condition*; darkneſs is uncomfortable. And though ſuch as are in ſpiritual darkneſs are not ſenſible of their danger (and therefore take up their comforts, rejoyce in the creature, and ſing care away) yet their danger is not the leſs, but more; and when once a man is made ſenſible of his darkneſs, he is covered about with many feares, doubts and ſorrows, *&c.* The darkneſs of the night is very uncomfortable, in compariſon of the light of the day; what then is the darkneſs of ſin and ignorance, in compariſon of the light of grace and of the knowledge of God! And therefore we ſhould,

Firſt, Pity the ignorant, thoſe eſpecially who are totally ignorant.

rant *and alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them*, as the Apoſtle deſcribes them (*Eph.* 4. 18.) We pity thoſe that are bodily blind, becauſe (as we ſay) they are dark, they cannot ſee the Sun; surely, if bodily darkneſs, or the darkneſs of the bodily eye, be to be pitied, if ſuch are to be prayed for that they may receive ſight, how much more is the darkneſs of the ſoul to be pitied, and the blindneſs of the mind! and therefore are others to pity them the more, becauſe they (not ſeeing their danger, nor their miſery by it) do not at all pity themſelves.

Secondly, If ignorance be darkneſs, and that an uncertain, a dangerous and an uncomfortable condition, then we ſhould uſe and improve all the means we can, or, within our compaſs, for the curing of our own ſouls and others of this evil; how ſhould they that are in a ſtate of ignorance deſire knowledge! The great end of ſending the miniſtry of the Goſpel to any people, is to open their eyes, and turn them from this darkneſs to light (*Acts* 26. 18.) Chriſt ſaith to the Church of *Laodicea*, in that evil (*Rev.* 3. 18.) *I counſel thee to anoint thy eyes with eye-ſalve, that thou mayeſt ſee*; that is, uſe thoſe means that are proper for the gaining of true knowledge in the things of God. Thou pretendeſt to have knowledge, but thy darkneſs is more than thy light, and thy ignorance more than thy knowledge; therefore I counſel thee to buy of me eye-ſalve, that thou mayeſt ſee.

Secondly, Foraſmuch as *Elihu* ſaith, *We cannot order our ſpeech by reaſon of darkneſs*; we, though knowing men, know not what to ſay.

Note;

There is much darkneſs remaining in thoſe that have moſt light in this world.

They that know much and have the cleareſt ſight, are yet dark in many things; what they ſee is but little to what they ſee not (1 *Cor.* 13. 9.) *We know but in part*, and (*verſ.* 12.) *We ſee through a glaſs darkly*. The ſight that we have of things, though in a Goſpel-way, is but a kind of dark ſight, *we ſee through a glaſs darkly*. *Elihu* ſaw himſelf compaſt about with much darkneſs; and who may not find darkneſs yet abiding in him? What-ever our light or knowledge is, all that we know is not half ſo much as that which we know not; this ſhould humble us. We are very apt to be

be proud of that knowledge we have (*Knowledge puffs up*) but did we remember how much ignorance is mixed and amaſſed with our knowledge, how much darkneſs with our light, we ſhould ſee little reaſon to be proud of it, or puffe up with it.

Take theſe Inferences of duty from this ſecond Note.

Firſt, *We ſhould always be praying for Light. Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights*: If we would have light from the Father of lights we muſt ask it.

Secondly, *Let the moſt ſeeing take heed of preſuming that they ſee all.* Some think they know enough, yea, that they have all knowledge, what is it that they know not? But *Elihu* and his friends ſaid well, *We cannot order our ſpeech by reaſon of darkneſs.* Do not ſay you know all, how much ſoever you know. It is an old rule and a true one, whether you take it with reſpect to actions or propoſitions, *The wiſeſt man ſeeth not all.* And one of the Ancients hath rightly taught us, *That the beſt and higheſt point of our knowledge, is to confeſs our ignorance in the things of God.*

Bernardus *non vidit omnia.*

In his quæ dicuntur de Deo maxima ſcientiæ eſt ignorantiam fateri. Cyril. Cat. 6.

Thirdly, If the darkneſs of ignorance be not quite diſpelled from the moſt enlightened and knowing ſouls, Then, *As they who have received moſt light of knowledge, have cauſe enough to be humbled in themſelves, ſo to beware of deſpiſing others.*

Thirdly, When *Elihu* ſaith, *We cannot order our ſpeech by reaſon of darkneſs*,

Obſerve;

Ignorance is a very great hinderance in our approaches and addreſſes to God.

As God himſelf is light, ſo they who come to God, need much light: They need light,

Firſt, About their own condition.

Secondly, About the diſpenſations of God under which they are.

Thirdly, About the nature and tenour of the Covenant.

Fourthly, About the nature and divine properties of God, with whom they have to do.

Fifthly, About the excellency, faithfulneſs and all-ſufficiency of Chriſt, who hath done all for them.

Sixthly, About the freeneſs of the grace of God towards them.

Seventhly, About the power and working of grace in them, eſpecially of that grace of Faith.

If we want the grace of Faith, we know not how to order our ſpeech before God, nor can we come to God without faith (*Heb.* 11.6.)& if we want the knowledge of theſe things, we muſt needs want faith in them, or rather in God concerning them. A dark ſoul is a confuſed ſoul; how then is it poſſible that he ſhould order his ſpeech before God, who is himſelf confuſed & out of order? Perſons muſt be well compoſed, before their actions, ſpeeches or addreſſes can. Therefore if you would have free acceſs to God, and order your ſpeech before him aright, labour for a clear light, or as the Apoſtle ſpeakes (*Col.* 2. 3.) for *the full aſſurance of underſtanding, to the acknowledgment of the myſtery of God, and of the Father, and of Chriſt*; that is (as I conceive) of God the Father, in and through his Son, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. That's the great ſtudy, and glory of Chriſtians; they have the moſt excellent ſubject in the world to ſtudy upon, and grow up in the knowledge of. Other Sciences conſider and contemplate the Creature, and the things of this Life; but Chriſtianity winds up the ſoul to the meditation of the *Creator in the Mediator, whom to know is Eternal Life.*

Fourthly, As darkneſs is conſidered in the Object,

Note;

That things of God are ſome darkneſs, that we know not how to ſpeak of them as we ought: Or, *There is a darkneſs in the Word, Wayes and Works of God, which we cannot overcome.*

The beſt have not light enough to look through all the darkneſs and obſcurity that is in the Works and Word of God. I do not affirm this, to caſt that reproach of obſcurity upon the Word of God, which the *Papiſts* do: The Word of God hath in it abundance of light, yea, 'tis a light; there is enough in it ſo plain, that any who have any true light, may ſee much of it, and be able to order their ſpeech comfortably and competently, that is, acceptably, before God about it. Yet there is a myſterious darkneſs in many parts of the Word and Works of God, which our light is not clear enough to maſter and get through. God hath purpoſely done and ſpoken ſome things, which ſtand as ſecrets, which our eye

eye cannot pierce into, that he might keep us low and little in our own eyes. As there is enough in the Word, which the ſimpleſt may underſtand and ſpeak of to ſalvation, ſo there are ſome things there to poze the wiſeſt, and hold them in a ſilent admiration. The Apoſtle *Peter* (2 *Epiſt.* 3. 16.) ſpeaking about the Epiſtles of *Paul*, ſaith, *In them there are ſome things hard to be underſtood*: He doth not ſay, all things in the Epiſtles of *Paul* are hard to be underſtood, but ſome things are, and they are ſo for our exerciſe and tryal. As thoſe things are altogether ſecrets to us, which God hath not revealed, ſo ſome things are in a great degree ſecrets to us, though God hath revealed them; and if ſo,

Then, Firſt, Let us *believe when we cannot underſtand.* Faith hath a knowledge about all general Principles; yet he that hath no more Faith in ſome ſpecial Scripture-Principles and Myſteries than he hath knowledge, will have but little Faith in them. Though we muſt have a knowledge about every thing we believe, yet we may be much more in believing many things, than we are in knowing them; we may have much Faith in that, of which we have but little knowledge. As Faith is the evidence of thoſe things which cannot be ſeen at all by the eye of ſence, ſo it is the evidence of ſome things to us, which are very little ſeen by the eye of the underſtanding. The bleſſed Virgin ſaid, *How ſhall this be?* When ſhe was told ſhe ſhould have a Son, ſhe could not underſtand the thing, there was a darkneſs in it, yet ſhe believed it.

Secondly, When we find darkneſs in the Works or Truths of God, which are the Object of our Faith, Let us adore what we cannot ſee, and admire where we cannot apprehend.

Thirdly, When we find darkneſs in any of the works of God, Let us be ſure to forbear to cenſure or queſtion thoſe works. How vain a thing is it to judg, when we do not underſtand, or to ſay that is not done well, which we know not how it is done! Doubtleſs, *We cannot order our ſpeech* (about ſuch things) *before God, by reaſon of darkneſs*; and therefore we ſhould tremble to ſpeak raſhly or hardly of them. *Elihu* heightens the poynt yet further in the next words.

Verſ. 20. *Shall it be told him that I ſpeak? if a man ſpeak, ſurely he ſhall be ſwallowed up.*

I find another rendring of theſe words, in ſuch a tenour as this; *Is there any need that he ſhould be told what I ſpeak?* As if *Elihu's* meaning were, that God, being omniſcient and every where preſent, needeth not any to bring him a report what men ſay or do; he knows our doings, and hears all our ſayings, though none tell him. *I hearkned and heard* (ſaith the Lord, *Jer.* 8. 6.) *He that planted the ear, ſhall he not hear? he that formed the eye, ſhall he not ſee?* If any man behave himſelf amiſs, or ſpeak amiſs, God ſeeth it, God heareth it. The *Omnipotent* needs no helper, the *Omniſcient* needs no informer, no intelligencer, to bring him an account of what is done or ſpoken: *Is there any need* (ſaith *Elihu*, according to this reading) *that he ſhould be told what I ſpeak?*

We render

Shall it be told him that I ſpeak?

Verba forenſi videtur ut res eſſet mihi verſur. Domandabitur, vel in eſt i referemur. Mierl.

Here ſome, inſtead of the word *told* tranſlate *record*; ſhall it be recorded, regiſtred or written in a book, *that I ſpeak*, that is, that I have undertaken thy cauſe as thou haſt ſtated it? Shall this be recorded, and the record ſent to God, that I intend to be thy Advocate? ſurely no; neither I, nor any man of wiſdome or diſcretion will undertake to ſpeak in this matter, after thy manner. *Shall it be told him that I ſpeak?* I dare not, I would not have it told him that I will, for a World.

An aliquis audebit ei narrare quæ locutus ſum ſic; non ſperat ſe locuturus eſſe de gubernatione Dei. Piſc.

Hence Note, Firſt;

No man who underſtands himſelf, will venture upon the doing or ſpeaking of any thing that may provoke God, or be diſpleaſing to him.

Will any wiſe man be an Advocate to plead a Cauſe, which he knows will, upon juſt grounds, offend and diſtaſt an earthly Judg? The Preacher (ſaith *Solomon*, meaning himſelf, *Eccl.* 12. 10.) *ſought to find out acceptable words*; the Hebrew is, *words of delight*, or, *words of the will*: He meaneth not flattering words, or men-pleaſing words, but ſuch words as may profit men, or pleaſe men for their profit, that is (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Rom.* 15. 2.) *for their good to edification.* Now, if we ſhould not provoke men, but

but ſeek to find out (in the ſence given) words acceptable to them, ſhould we not much more take heed of ſpeaking any thing to the provocation of God? ſhould we not ſeek to find out words of delight and acceptation with him, *words of his Will*, that is, words every way agreeable to his holy will?

Secondly, As *Elihu* feared ſuch a report ſhould be made to God,

Note;

It is high preſumption to do or ſpeak amiſs, not fearing God ſhould know of it.

We are afraid to do that evil which may be reported to great perſons, who have power to puniſh us: If ſuch a man be told (ſay ſome) what we have done, what will become of us? Many are not afraid to do evil, who yet are afraid it ſhould be told their betters what evil they have done. Servants will ſometimes thus check children in a Family, when they have done amiſs, *We will tell your Father, we will do your errand to your Mother*; that's a dreadful word to a child that hath any reverence of Father or Mother, to ſay, *I will tell your Father and Mother of you.* The Lord knoweth all that we do amiſs (as was ſaid before) though no man tell him; but ſhall it be told to God what ſuch and ſuch men ſpeak or do, and will they ſpeak or do it ſtill? ſhall it be told God what they ſpeak, and againſt whom they ſpeak? ſhall it be told God whom they reproach, whom they revile? and will they venture it? 'Tis dangerous when ſuch Tales are truly told in the ears of God againſt the men of the World; they were better have Tales told, and reports made againſt them to all the Princes of the earth, than have reports made to God againſt them. To have a poor ſoul, upon juſt grounds, telling God what evil men have done againſt him, how they have ſlandered and reproached him, how they have oppreſt and vext him, will come at laſt to a ſad account againſt them. *Shall it be told God that I ſpeak?* (ſaith *Elihu*) And ſhall it be told God that we do evil, and we regard it not? Shall we anſwer thoſe that tell us, they have told, or will tell God of our evil doings, as impudent children and ſervants do ſuch as threaten them with telling their Parents and Maſters of their evil doings, *What care we? do if you will?* O let us take heed how we do or ſpeak that, which, if told in the ears of God, may

may cauſe blame, and bring his diſpleaſure upon us. There are a ſort of Tale-bearers very odious in the ſight of God and all good men; ſuch are ſpoken of, *Prov.* 11. 13. *Prov.* 18. 8. But they who bring reports to God (as *Joſeph* did to his Father *Jacob*, concerning his brethren, *Gen.* 37. 2.) of the evils done by men, ſuch Tale-bearers (if I may ſo call them) do but their duty; and as their reports are accepted with God, ſo they haſten wrath upon evil men (*Luke* 18. 7.) *Shall it be told him that I ſpeak?*

If a man ſpeak, ſurely he ſhall be ſwallowed up.

Si dixerit, Heb ſcil. apud ſe, illud nempe, ſe velle talem ſermonem Deo narrare. Piſc.

That is, if any man ſpeak, if a wiſe man ſpeak, and if he ſpeak as wiſely as he can, and place his words in the beſt order he can, yet if he ſhall deſire (as *Job* hath done) to come near unto God, and plead with him, *ſurely he ſhall be ſwallowed up.* *Job*, in the hotteſt of thoſe deſires to plead with God, did not (as hath formerly been noted in favour of him) challenge God; he did not think himſelf a Match for God in pleading his cauſe before him, he (good man) was far from ſuch a preſumptuous ſpirit: yet becauſe he inſiſted ſo much upon that deſire of pleading his cauſe with God, *Elihu* had reaſon to check him in ſuch language as this, *If a man ſpeak, ſurely he ſhall be ſwallowed up.* We that are duſt and aſhes may not be ſo bold with God, 'tis beſt for us to lye at his foot, and let him do what he will with us, only beg of him that we may improve his dealings, and profit by his corrections; if the wiſeſt and holieſt of men ſhall ſpeak otherwiſe, *Surely they ſhall be*

Swallowed up.

The word implies, that a man ſo ſpeaking ſhall be ruined and brought to nought. Mr. *Broughton* renders, *Would any man plead when he ſhall be undone?* No man but a mad man would ſpeak in a buſineſs wherein he muſt needs be ruined. We ſay well, *ſwallowed up*, that is, both he and his underſtanding ſhall be utterly confounded. This phraſe of ſpeech is often uſed in Scripture when a greater power undertakes a leſſer: thus fire ſwalloweth up ſtubble, and oppreſſors their poor underlings. *David* ſaith of his enemies, with reſpect to the greatneſs of their malice (*Pſ.* 56. 1. *Pſ.* 57. 3) *They would ſwallow me up.* Poſſibly they had not power enough to do it, or no fitting opportunity to do it, but they wanted no will to do

do it, *They would ſwallow me up* if they could, that is, they would make an utter end of me, or diſpatch me quite. So this word is uſed in ſeveral other places (*Iſa.* 28. 7.) *They are ſwallowed up of wine.* Some ſwallow down the wine ſo long, till the wine ſwalloweth them up, the wine gets the maſtery over them, and *they are no longer* (as we ſpeak proverbially) *their own men.* The Apoſtle gives order concerning the inceſtuous perſon that had been caſt out of the Church (2 *Cor.* 2. 5.) *receive him* (ſaith he) *leſt he be ſwallowed up of over-much ſorrow*, that is, leſt ſorrow get the maſtery of him. It is not good that the floods of ſorrow (though it be a ſorrow for ſin) ſhould prevail over us, ſo as to ſwallow us up in the gulph of deſpair. Again, while the Apoſtle aſſures us, and would have us triumph in that aſſurance, that death ſhall never do a godly man any hurt, he thus expreſſeth it (1 *Cor.* 15. 54.) *Death is ſwallowed up in victory*, that is, in and by the victory of *Jeſus Chriſt*: He, by dying, quite overcame death; he did not only wound it, and worſt it, or get the better of it, or rout it, but totally ruin'd it, as to any power of hurting us; all which, and whatſoever elſe concerns the death of death, and the deſtruction of the grave, is wrapt up in that one word, *Death is ſwallowed up in victory.* And therefore alſo it is ſaid by the ſame Apoſtle, (2 *Cor.* 5. 4.) *Mortality ſhall be ſwallowed up of Life.* Jeſus Chriſt hath brought in ſuch a life through the Goſpel, as ſhall at laſt put an utter end to Mortality. Our Mortality now by degrees puts an end to, or ſwalloweth up our Lives, but then Life will quite ſwallow up, or put an end to our Mortality; that is, our Mortality ſhall be quite removed and taken out of the way, by that Life which Chriſt hath purchaſed for his people by his own death. All theſe Scriptures ſhew the force of the word, here uſed by *Elihu*, when he ſaith, *If a man ſpeak, ſurely he ſhall be ſwallowed up.*

If a man ſpeak;

How? or to whom? The anſwer is, *If a man ſpeak to God, he ſhall be ſwallowed up.* But ſhall every one that ſpeaks to God be ſwallowed up? Not ſo; therefore we muſt go to the manner of ſpeaking. If a man ſpeak to God, not keeping his diſtance, if a man ſpeak to God without a Mediatour, he ſhall be ſwallowed up, as a drop of water is ſwallowed up of the Ocean, or as a ſpark

Perdetur vir ille fulgore celſitudinis & Majeſtatis ejus perſtrictus

ſpark of fire is ſwallowed up in a great flame, or as the light of a Candle, or Glow-worm, is ſwallowed up by the Sun; there is no ſtanding for the Creature before God, in ſuch a nearneſs of acceſs, but by faith in a Mediator; *If a man ſpeak he ſhall be ſwallowed up.* Man is no match for God, or he is a moſt unequal match.

Yet further, theſe words may note the conqueſt of the mind or underſtanding of man, by an object which is too high and excellent for it; for then his thoughts, yea and his Reaſon too, are ſwallowed up, and he is carried out of himſelf, as a man in an extaſie or trance. When St. *Paul was caught up to the third heavens, and heard unſpeakable words*, he was ſwallowed up with the greatneſs of the matter, and was in a divine extaſie, whether *in the body he could not tell, or whether out of the body he could not tell* (2 Cor. 12. 2, 3, 4.) Thus (ſaith *Elihu*) ſhall that man be ſwallowed up, who over-boldly ſpeaks to God about the great myſteries of providence, or about any matter too high for him. And therefore, O *Job*, thou haſt not done well to ſpeak ſo often of pleading with God; and ſurely, if any man after thy example, ſpeak complainingly of what God hath done, or himſelf hath ſuffered at the hand of God, he is ſure to be undone, *He ſhall be ſwallowed up.*

Hence obſerve;

Man is not able to bear the Glory and Majeſty of God.

God dwels in the light which no man can approach unto (1 Tim. 6. 16.) Mans darkneſs is not able to comprehend Gods light; if he venture too near it, he will ſoon be ſwallowed up. The vulgar Latine renders that place (*Proverbs* 25. 27.) *He that is a ſearcher of Majeſty ſhall be oppreſſed by the Glory*; that is, whoſoever ſearcheth boldly into the Majeſty of God, ſhall be ſwallowed up by the Glory of God. We tranſlate that text in the *Proverbs* thus, *For men to ſearch their own glory, is no glory.* There is a truth in the former tranſlation, though it be not a true tranſlation, for, a man that *ſearcheth into the Majeſty of God, ſhall be overpowered with his Glory.* And as man is ſoon overpowered, or ſwallowed up by the Majeſty of God, ſo alſo by and in the Myſteries of God. Chriſt told his diſciples (*John* 16. 12.) *That he had many things to ſay unto them, which they were not able to bear.* If they who had received ſo much grace, could not bear the deeper myſteries of

Qui perſcrutator eſt Majeſtatis opprimetur gloria. Vulg.

of the Goſpel, ſpoken to them by Chriſt cloathed with frail fleſh, how much leſſe can any man bear the Majeſty of God in ſpeaking to him, or, God ſpeaking to him in his Majeſty! And ſo ſome tranſlate and read the words of *Elihu* in the text under hand, *For if he ſpeak, man ſhall be devoured or ſwallowed up*; that is, if God ſpeak, man (who before thought himſelf *Some-body*, or that he was able to reaſon with him) will be quite confounded in himſelf by the infinite wiſdom of God, his tongue will faulter or cleave to the roof of his mouth, and he rendered unable to ſpeak one word in his own defence. *Moſes* (*Exod.* 19. 12.) was commanded to ſet bounds about Mount *Horeb*, that the people might not come too neer; the reaſon was, that the people might by thoſe bounds be warned, not to be curious or over-bold in their approaches to the Majeſty of God, nor over-buſie in prying into his Secrets. As if it had been ſaid, if you come to near, you will be even ſwallowed up. *Moſes* repeating to the *Iſraelites* the terrible Majeſty of God in giving the Law at Mount *Horeb*, minds them in what a trembling frame they then were (*Deut.* 5. 24, 25, 26.) *And ye ſaid, behold the Lord our God hath ſhewed us his glory, and his greatneſs, and we have heard his voice out of the midſt of the fire; we have ſeen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth* (which implieth, that man, in this life, cannot bear the fuller manifeſtation of God, and live) *Now therefore, why ſhould we die? for this great fire will conſume us; if we hear the voice of God any more, then we ſhall die.* What was this great fire? It was God himſelf, that is, an extraordinary appearance of God, who is ſeveral times in Scripture expreſt by fire. As if they had ſaid, We acknowledge that we have had wonderful condeſcention and mercy from God, that we have heard him ſpeak and live; but, that we live, is not only a mercy but a miracle; therefore we poor wormes dare not run the hazzard a ſecond time, if we hear him ſpeak any more, we ſhall die: Therefore they deſired *Moſes* (who in that was a type of Chriſt, *Gal.* 3. 19.) to go near, and be as a Mediator between them and God, that they might not have to do with God immediately, but receive the Law by his hand. Such is the infinite Majeſty of God (though it will be our bleſſedneſſe in the next life, for ever to enjoy it) that here in this Life we are not able to receive it. The Glory of God is ſo pure, that man cloathed with corruptible fleſh & blood cannot ſtand before it; the

very glimpſes of it aſtoniſh, and leave us for dead, *Rev.* 1. 16, 17. Man muſt dye before he can ſee God and live; his body muſt be glorified before, he can bear that weight of glory, which conſiſts in beholding the face of God, or, *in knowing him* (in our proportion) *as we are known* (1 *Cor.* 13.12.)

But though (as the *Iſraelites* there ſaid of themſelves) we cannot hear God ſpeak and live, yet cannot we ſpeak to God and live, or, and not be ſwallowed up?

I anſwer it in theſe three things. Firſt, If a man ſpeak to God, as queſtioning his dealings with him, or, as calling God to an account (which in ſome ſence *Job* did, and therein went beyond his line) he ſhall be ſwallowed up.

Secondly, [illegible] ſpeak to God, as preſuming that he can [illegible] God, or all the dealings of God with [illegible] ſurely be ſwallowed up. *The thoughts of God are above our thoughts, and his wayes above our wayes, as high as the heavens are above the earth*, Iſa. 55. 9.

Thirdly, [illegible] ſpeak to God in our own name, or in a ſelf-righteouſneſſe, then alſo we ſhall ſurely be ſwallowed up. *Job* (as we have inquired him before) never attempted to ſpeak to God in his own righteouſneſſe, though he often magnified his own righteouſneſſe both before and towards men. Woe to all the righteouſneſſe of man before the moſt righteous God. But *Job* was too bold (according to the firſt anſwer) in asking an account, or a reaſon of God, concerning his ſufferings; there was his failing, and for that he received this check by *Elihu*, *If a man ſpeak, he ſhall be ſwallowed up.*

The meaneſt, the pooreſt believing ſoul may come and ſpeak, and ſpeak boldly to God in the name of Jeſus Chriſt (*Heb.* 4. 16.) Thus we may come and welcome, coming thus we ſhall not be ſwallowed up with the Majeſty, much leſſe with the wrath or diſpleaſure of God. If coming thus we are ſwallowed up, it will be only with the love and favour of God, with the goodneſſe and kindneſſe of God: And to be ſwallowed up thus, will be the ſweeteſt morſel that ever we ſwallowed, even perfect bleſſedneſſe and life for evermore. When once death is ſwallowed up in victory, and mortality of life, then ſhall we be ſwallowed up in glory. And therefore whatſoever the Lord doth with us or ours in this world, let us be ſilent before him, humbly

humbly adoring his Soveraignty and Wiſdom, not in the leaſt queſtioning either his Righteouſneſſe or his Goodneſſe; for if a man ſpeak ſo, *Surely he ſhall be dreadfully ſwallowed up.*

JOB, Chap. 37. Verſ. 21, 22.

21. *And now men ſee not the bright light which is in the Clouds: but the wind paſſeth and cleanſeth them.*

22. *Fair weather cometh out of the north: With God is terrible Majeſty.*

THe two verſes laſt opened, may be taken as a Parentheſis to the former diſcourſe concerning Gods wonderful works in nature, forming thoſe dreadful impreſſions of Thunder and Lightening, Storms & Tempeſt, in the Air; whereby *Elihu* having repreſt (as he ſuppoſed) the ſwelling of *Jobs* ſpirit, by calling him to teach them what to ſay to God in his cauſe, for they (as he had handled it) *could not order their ſpeech, by reaſon of darkneſs*, nor durſt *Elihu* venture that it ſhould be told God, he intended to ſpeak, knowing, or foreſeing that if he made ſuch an attempt, he might ſoon be ſwallowed up by the incomprehenſible greatneſs and glory of God.

Elihu, I ſay, having made this little diverſion, or digreſſion (as he had done ſometimes before) to coole and calme the ſpirit of *Job*, he returns to his former matter, in theſe words, and conſiders further the works of God, in thoſe higher Regions, the Aireal heavens, how he muffles up, and covers the light, and how he unvailes and opens it again by his own power, and according to the pleaſure of his will. The words are plain, according to our tranſlation; I ſhall open them breifly as they are here ſet down, and then give out a further reading of them, which raiſes the ſcope and intendment of *Elihu* yet higher.

Verſ. 21. *And now men ſee not the bright light which is in the Clouds.*

And now. Some have conjectured, that at this very inſtant of time while *Elihu* was diſcourſing, there happened a ſudden change in the Air, or in the face of the Heavens; therefore he ſaith, *and now*, do not the heavens grow dark, ſo that men cannot ſee the bright light which is in the Clouds? as if here were a preparation to that *Whirlwind* or Tempeſt, out of which God himſelf is ſaid to ſpeak to *Job*, at the beginning of the next chapter.

Yet, I apprehend, we need not expound the word [*now*] ſo ſtrictly, with reſpect to the preſent ſeaſon or moment of time, but rather to the preſent matter; as we often uſe that particle *Now*, both in ſpeech and writing, not ſo much to denote the direct inſtant, or preſent time, as for a leading word to the matter which is to follow.

And, now men ſee not (or they cannot ſee) *the bright light which is in the Clouds.*

Light is the moſt viſible thing in the world; though indeed we are not ſo properly ſaid to ſee the Light at all, as to ſee all things by the light; for it is *Light which maketh manifeſt*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks (*Epheſ.* 5. 13.) But though Light be (in vulgar ſenſe) ſo viſible in its own nature, and (in ſtricteſt ſenſe) that which maketh all things viſible, yet by accident, or by ſome providential interpoſition, light it ſelf is not alwayes to be ſeen. Light is often hidden from our eyes, and then (as *Elihu* ſpeakes here) *men ſee not the bright light.* The word which we tranſlate *bright light*, ſignifies the *whiteneſs of Snow*, and I find it applied (*Levit.* 13. 2.) to the whiteneſs of Leproſie; *if there ſhall appear in the fleſh a bright* (or ſhining) *ſpot, a ſpot like ſnow, then*, &c. And hence it is ſaid of *Gehazi* (2 *Kings* 5. 27.) that when his maſter called him to account about his going after *Naaman*, & found him flattering and faulty, he laid that ſore judgment upon him, *The leproſie therefore of Naaman ſhall cleave unto thee and unto thy ſeed for ever; and he went out of his preſence a leper as white as Snow.* It is this word, which ſignifies, as any extraordinary whiteneſs and clearneſs, ſo the clearneſs and whiteneſs of Snow in particular, which hath a kind of tranſparency in it, and is full of light: Yet the light which is in the Clouds when the Sun ſhineth,

בהיר *Proprie candidus. unde* בהרת *Candens lepra.* Druſ. *Propriè denotat novum inſtar egregie ſplendidum & candidum eſſe.* Rab. Kinhi.

ſhineth, is much more bright than Snow. *Now, men ſee not the bright light*

Which is in the Clouds,

Or, in the Skie; for the word here uſed (as hath been ſhewed before) ſignifies the Skie, the Firmament, and ſomtimes the Air, as well as the Clouds, and it imports the natural thinneſs of thoſe Cœleſtial Bodies, in that higher and upper Region of the World. *Men ſee not the bright light which is in the Clouds.* Light is properly in the Sun; the Sun is the veſſel, the vehicle, the ſeat, the chariot of Light; but as Light is in the Sun ſubjectively, ſo Light is in the Clouds objectively, and alſo as they are a Medium through which the Light is conveighed and paſſeth to us. Yet ſomtimes men ſee not that bright Light which is in the Clouds, for Clouds being very thick or thickened, they become to us as an opacous Body, through which the Light can neither find nor make its way, and then there's no beholding the Light of the Sun ſhining upon them in its greateſt brightneſs; while the Air is thus Clouded, *Men ſee not the bright Light which is in the Clouds.*

שחק *Æthera tenui ejus ſubſtantia, nam* שחק *ſignificat comminuere.* Druſ.

Hence note;

God can make that which is moſt viſible in it ſelf, inviſible unto us.

There is alwayes bright Light in the Air, when and where the Sun is up, and gotten above the Horizon. The Sun ſhines continually, how dark ſoever the weather be; but God can draw ſuch a Curtaine of Clouds, Vapours and Miſts, in the day time, between us and the bright face of the Sun, that we cannot behold it. Light alwayes is, but Light is not alwayes to be ſeen; when Clouds come between, the Sun is darkened in the clear day.

We may infer as a further improvement of natural things, to thoſe which are ſpiritual, That the light of God's face, or countenance, that is, the light of his favour, ſhines ever towards his faithful ſervants, though it be not alwayes ſeen, Clouds coming between may ſhadow them from that bleſſed Light (*Pſal.* 97. 2.) *Clouds and darkneſs are round about him*, that is, his diſpenſations are dark and cloudy; yet, as then, *Righteouſneſs and Judgement are the habitation of his Throne*, that is, as then he doth right to all ſorts of men, ſo, then alſo Mercies and Loving-kindneſſe ſtand round

round about his Throne, or, as the Apoſtle expreſſeth it (*Heb.* 4. 16.) his Throne is then, *A Throne of Grace*, that is, he hath Grace or Favour in his heart, to beſtow upon all his People, who come to him, not with a preſuming, but a believing *boldneſs*. Our ſins and tranſgreſſions are called, *a Cloud, a thick Cloud* (Iſa. 44. 22.) *I have blotted out as a thick Cloud thy tranſgreſſions, and as a Cloud thy ſins.* Sins are Clouds, and thoſe Clouds often hinder us from ſeeing the bright light of the face of God ſhining upon us; and as our ſins uſually hinder us from ſeeing that bright light which is in the face of God, ſo God ſometimes, to try the graces, the faith, the patience of his people, or to ſee what they will do, how they will behave themſelves in a dark and deſerted ſtate (God I ſay, ſometimes for theſe and ſuch like ends) with-draws himſelf, and will not ſuffer them to ſee the bright light of his pleaſed face. As the light of the things of this world, ſo of that other and better world, is often hid, or the comfort of them is concealed from us. *Light is ſown for the Righteous*; it doth not always ſpring up and appear to the righteous. *Luther* chiefly inſiſts upon this myſtical interpretation or application of the text, giving it out by way of ſimilitude; *As* (ſaith he) *the light of the Sun is many times covered with a Cloud, and ſometimes hindred by Eclipſes, ſo the light of comfort, or peace and joy in this world, is hidden from the eyes of the people of God; yet by and by he ſends a comfortable and powerful gale, to blow away or diſperſe thoſe Clouds, and then the light of his countenance & favour ſhines freely upon them again.* And let this be remembred, that when their day is a day of darkneſs and gloomineſſe, yet the Light ſhines ſtill, the favour of God is towards them ſtill, though it appeares not; and when they have been a while exerciſed under this Darkneſſe, Light will return as it followeth in the text, *Men ſee not the bright light which is in the Clouds,*

But the wind paſſeth and cleanſeth them.

The wind paſſeth. Queſt. But what is the wind?

Anſw. The wind is a hot and dry exhalation, raiſed from the Earth by the power of the heavenly bodyes, which being repell'd or forced back by the coldneſs of the middle Region, moves obliquely or ſlantingly, ſometimes very violently through the air. The Latine word (*ventus*) ſignifying *the wind*, is derived by ſome Grammarians

rians from a word (*vehementia*) noting the vehement or forcible motion of it, or as others (*a veniendo*) from a word ſignifying *to come*, becauſe it comes this way and that way, at times every way; or as our bleſſed Saviour expreſſeth it (*John* 3. 8.) *The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.*

The ſupream or ſupernatural cauſe, both making and moderating or governing the wind, is God himſelf: For though that text in the Holy Goſpel laſt mentioned ſaith, *The wind bloweth where it liſteth*, yet is to be underſtood only in reference to man; it bloweth where it liſteth, for all man, man can neither direct it, nor controule or check it. But as to God, the wind bloweth where he liſteth, not where it ſelf liſteth; 'tis he *who gathereth the wind in his fiſts* (Pro. 30. 4.) 'Tis he *who bringeth them out of his treaſures* (Pſal. 135. 7.)

The natural remote cauſe of the wind, is the power of the Sun and Starrs (as Philoſophers well agreeing with reaſon tell us) drawing up thoſe exhalations, and attenuating them into a fitneſs for that purpoſe.

The natural, neere, or next cauſe (ſay they) of the winds, is the coldneſs of the middle Region, which will not ſuffer the aſpiring exhalation to riſe higher, but thruſts it back, and ſo it moves hither or thither, ſide-wiſe, or along this lower Region of the air towards the Earth, doing thoſe ſervices, and ſomtimes ſtrange exployts, with which experience acquaints us daily.

By this Meteor, the wind, the life of man is in a great meaſure maintained. For though it be a truth, that *no man can live* (as we ſay) *by the air*; yet it is as true, that no man can live without the air: Did not the Lungs inſpire and expire, draw in and ſend out freſh air, man would ſoone be ſuffocated and dye; and 'tis moſt certain, that the heart, and blood, and whole body of man, are very much affected, according to the nature of the wind or air, in which they breath. *Plinie* tells us, that *man may live without food ſeven dayes*, but no man can live one houre, being wholy intercluded from wind and air. And hence the Latine word (*anima*) which ſignifies the ſoul, not only as to the ſubſtance of it, (which is immortal) but as to the ſubſiſtence of it in the body (in which reſpect 'tis mortal, being no more than life, this word I ſay in the Latine) is ſuppoſed to come from that Greek word (ἄνεμος) which

which properly ſignifieth the wind. The ſame notion of life may be collected from the Hebrew word *Nepheſh*, which is indifferently tranſlated, *Soul*, *Life*, *Wind*. And ſo the life of man is not only called *wind* (as *Job* called his, *Chap.* 7. 7.) becauſe of the frailty or ſpeedy paſſing of it away; but becauſe the continuance or abiding of it in the body, is by the taking in and ſending out of wind.

I have already at the 9th verſe of this Chapter, ſhewed the ſeveral uſes which God hath appointed the winds unto, both in a way of Mercy, and of Judgment: They purge the air, they gather the Clouds for Rain, they ſcatter them, and ſo make faire weather, they move the waters, which otherwiſe by ſtanding ſtill would putrifie, corrupt, and grow unwholſome, yea infectious both to man and beaſt, they refreſh the Earth, and cauſe all ſorts of vegetables to flouriſh, they are alſo, as it were, the food and nouriſhment, the meat and drink of mans life; there's no living without them.

I ſhall not ſtay further to diſcourſe or diſcover the nature and the wonders, or the wonderfull nature of the wind, having done ſomwhat towards it (as was ſaid) before at the ninth verſe. Only take notice of this uſe of the wind, with reſpect to the Clouds, mentioned expreſly in this Text, *The wind paſſeth*

And cleanſeth them.

It was ſaid in that former part of this Chapter (where *Elihu* ſpake of the wind) *That the winds are the Broomes of Heaven*, they ſweep the Heavens, they drive away the Clouds, the miſts and foggs which dull and obfuſcate the air. The expreſſion here in the Text ſorts well with that Metaphor, *The wind paſſeth and cleanſeth them*, that is, the wind paſſing through the air, cleanſeth it from thoſe Clouds, and ſo cauſeth the light of the Sun to ſhine forth freely and fully to us again. The wind at one time gathers the Clouds, and the wind at another time ſcatters them: *The wind is a cleanſer*. So much is ſuppoſed in that Negative expreſſion (*Jer.* 4 11.) where the Lord threatens to ſend a *high wind from the wilderneſs, but not to fan nor to cleanſe. I* (ſaith the Lord) *will ſend a high wind*; but to what purpoſe? not for thoſe profitable and comfortable purpoſes, to fan, cool, and cleanſe the Air, but rather to wither and blaſt the fruits of the Earth, or to overthrow

throw and bear down all before it. The text in hand ſpeaks of a comfortable purpoſe of God in letting the wind out of his Treaſures, it bloweth away the Clouds which obſtruct the paſſage of the Light to us: *The wind paſſeth and cleanſeth them.*

Hence note;

What-ever ſtands in the way of our comforts, God can quickly remove it.

When Clouds cover the light from us, God hath his wind ready to chaſe them away, and clear up the weather. Never did any ſuch thick and dark Cloud of ſorrow and trouble hang over the heads, or fill the hearts of the people of God, but he had means at hand to diſpell and ſcatter it, or he could ſcatter it himſelf without means. When dreadfull Clouds of danger looked black upon and threatned the Church of God during the Reign of *Julian* the Apoſtate, *Athanaſius* ſaid, *It is but a little Cloud, a wind will ſhortly cleanſe it away*. His meaning was, now we are compaſſed about with fear and trouble, but peace and proſperity will not ſtay long before they return. *Nubecula eſt, citò tranſibit.*

This is true alſo if we carry it yet in a more ſpiritual way, as to thoſe Clouds of ſorrow which often darken and afflict our minds in the midſt of outward proſperity, or in the cleareſt Sunſhine-day of peace that ever was in this world; when theſe inward Clouds dwell, as it were, upon the ſoul, the Lord hath a wind which paſſeth and cleanſeth them away too. What is that wind? it is his holy Spirit. The word in the text, is uſed often to ſignifie, not only the natural wind in the air, but that divine wind the Holy Ghoſt, who is compared unto the wind in many places of Scripture, and his opperations are like thoſe of the wind: For *as the wind bloweth where it liſteth, we hear the ſound thereof, but know not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; ſo* (ſaith Chriſt) *is every one that is born of the Spirit* (John 3. 8.) And as our Regeneration is wrought by that ſecret, yet ſtrong and powerfull wind, ſo likewiſe is our conſolation. The Spirit of God doth thoſe offices in our hearts which the winds do in the air: As the wind diſpells and ſweeps away the Clouds which are gathered there; ſo the Spirit of God cleanſeth our ſouls from thoſe Clouds and foggs of ignorance and unbelief, of ſin and luſt, which are gathered in, and would, elſe, abide for ever upon our hearts. From all theſe Clouds *Boldnes*

the holy Spirit of God cleanſeth us in the work of Regeneration: And from all thoſe Clouds which trouble our Conſciences, the holy Spirit cleanſeth us in the work of Conſolation.

Some Interpreters expound the words only in this myſtical ſenſe, quite rejecting the proper. But though, by alluſion, we may improve the words to this ſpiritual ſenſe, yet doubtleſs *Elihu* ſpeaks here of the winds properly taken, or of the natural winds, and their ſenſible effects; and ſo, according to our reading, this Text, as it hath been opened, teacheth us what ſudden changes God makes in the Air. Now the light is ſhut up, or ſhut in, and anon it is let out again, and all by the powerful hand of God, who doth adminiſter theſe things to us interchangeably, as himſelf pleaſeth.

Secondly, The text, according to another reading (which others inſiſt much upon, and conceive pertinent to the ſcope of *Elihu*) runs thus; *For now men cannot ſee the bright light in the Clouds, when the wind paſſeth and cleanſeth them.* Mr *Broughton* tranſlates clearly ſo, his words are theſe; *And now men cannot look upon the light, when it is bright in the Air, then a wind paſſeth and cleanſeth it.* And then the ſence of the whole verſe is plainly a ſetting forth of the excellency, or ſuperexcellency rather, of the light of the Sun, which is ſo clear and ſplendid, that if the Air be but cleanſed from Clouds, if it be but a pure Air, no man is able to face it, nor his eye directly to behold it. We behold all things by the light of the Sun, but no man can ſtedfaſtly behold the light in the Sun; no man can look right up to the Sun, when it caſts forth its fiery rayes, and ſhines bright upon us. And this ſome conceive ſo genuine and clear an expoſition of the Text, that the light of it may ſeem to obſcure and darken all others. Now, according to this ſecond reading, the whole verſe, with that which followeth, contains an argument to confirm the former propoſition, laid down at the 20th verſe: *If a man ſpeak, he ſhall be ſwallowed up*, that is, if a man come too nigh unto God, and be over-bold with him, he ſhal even be ſwallowed up of his brightneſs & that it is ſo, I prove thus (ſaith *Elihu*) The very light of the Sun, which ſhines in the Air, is ſo bright and ſo powerful, that no man is able to hold up his eyes againſt it: And if ſo, then from the leſſer to the greater, his argument riſeth thus; *If when the Sun ſhineth brightly, no man is able to look upon it, then much leſs are we able to behold the bright Majeſty*

Jam enim non reſpiciunt (homines) lucem (quum) nitida eſt in ſuperioritate nubibus, quas ventus tranſiens purgavit. Tranſlatio Junii.

Nemo poteſt adverſis oculis nitidum ſolem contueri, quin ergo ferat præſentiam Majeſtatis dei. Junius.

Majeſty of God, or to comprehend his greatneſs. This rendring hath a very profitable ſenſe in it, leading *Job* to reaſon thus with himſelf, *I plainly ſee by all that hath been diſcourſed, that for as much as I am not able to bear the brightneſs, which breaks through the Clouds, nor the noiſe of Thunder (of which Elihu ſpake before) for as much as I am not able to bear the fierceneſs of a great Rain, nor the coldneſs of the Froſt, nor the impetuouſneſs of the Wind, nor the violence of a Tempeſt, for as much as I am not able to bear the clear light of the Sun ſhining in my face, therefore ſurely I am much leſs able to bear the Majeſty and glory of God, if he ſhould unvaile or open himſelf unto me.* Thus I ſay, *Elihu* leads *Job* to an humbling conviction, that he could not ſtand before the glorious Majeſty of God, becauſe he was not able to endure the brightneſs of the Sun ſhining upon him. *If the light of the Sun, the Created light, be too excellent for mortal eyes, then what is God the Creating light? what is God, who dwelleth in light, who is light, and in whom there is no darkneſs at all?* 'Tis a Maxime in Nature, *A viſible object exceeding bright, dazles the eye, and even deſtroys the ſight.* And why was all this ſpoken to *Job*? Surely to bring him upon his knees (as afterwards it did) to humble him, to take him off from his frequent appeals or deſires of approach to God for the debate and determination of his cauſe. The ſum of all in a word is as if *Elihu* had ſaid, *O Job, thou canſt not ſee the bright light of the Air, if the wind do but fan it and cleanſe the Clouds, how then ſhalt thou be able to diſpute thy cauſe before God, to whom the moſt glorious light of the Sun, is but a Cloud, yea but as a clod of earth?* The next words carry on this conviction yet further.

Excellens viſibile viſum deſtruit.

Verſ. 22. *Fair weather cometh out of the North: with God is terrible Majeſty.*

The former part of this verſe hath a reſpect to the latter part of the former; *The wind paſſeth and cleanſeth them, fair* (or *bright*) *weather cometh out of the North.* It hath been ſhewed before in opening the 9th verſe of this Chapter, that the South wind ingenders the Rain, and cauſeth foule weather, here (ſaith *Elihu*) *fair weather cometh out of the North. The North wind* (ſaith *Solomon, Pro.* 25. 22.) *driveth away Rain, ſo doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue. The North wind* blows coldly, yet it blowes clearly, it clears the Air from Clouds. We render, *Fair weather*

זהב *Aurum.*

cometh out of the North. The word translated *fair weather*, signifieth *gold*; *gold cometh out of the North.* Fair weather in its season, is worth much gold, and may well be called *golden weather*; the Sun in such seasons gilds both the Air and Earth with his precious beams. And I find an ancient Interpreter sticking much upon the strict signification of the Hebrew word, maintaining that *gold* is to be taken here properly; *Out of the North cometh gold*, because (saith he) in the Northern Countryes, through the greatness of Cold, the heat in those parts is so pent in the bowels of the Earth, that it more fully concocts and refines the gold, than in other places: *Out of the North comes gold*, that is, the purest gold. But, I conceive, that was not at all the business of *Elihu* here; and I find the Scripture in another place expressing that which is shining, beautifull, and precious, by *gold*, (*Zach.* 4. 12.) The oyle which the *two Olive-branches emptied out of themselves through the two golden pipes*, is called *gold*, or *golden oyle*, that is, bright oyle, pure oyle; and so because the light of the Sun shining in fair weather is purer and more defecate than the purest gold, therefore this Scripture expresseth it by *gold*; *through the North a golden cometh*, saith Mr *Broughton*.

Lux quavis auro splendidior. Lect.

Again, Some taking the word *gold* here metaphorically for any *pretious thing*, take the word *North* metaphorically also for any *evil thing*, that is, for any affliction, trouble, or sorrow which we meet with in this world; these are indeed as a cold chilling North-wind, and so they will needs give the sence of this Scripture mystically thus, *Out of the North cometh precious things*; that is, afflictions (which are as a cold chilling North-wind) make us more precious; or, through cold chilling afflictions, we are made more and more precious. *Job* saith, and this text may have such an allusion (and I give it no further) to that (*Chap.* 23. 10.) *When he hath tried me, I shall come forth gold*; that is, I shall come forth precious. Whether God doth try us by the North or by the South, whether by the heat of prosperity, or by the cold of adversity, if we are under his tryal, and are faithfull, we come out gold, we come out more precious from our tryals, than we came in. The Apostle hath a like allusion (1 *Pet.* 1. 6, 7.) *Ye are now for a season in heavinesse (if need be) through manifold temptations*, (that is, troubles, tribulations and afflictions) *That the triall of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though*

though it be tried with fire, might be found to praise, &c. Thus *Out of the North comes Gold, or this precious thing*, a tryed faith. That's a truth from the allegorical sense of this place; but I shall not stay upon it.

The proper meaning is, *Elihu* would have *Job*, and all men know, God hath his several Climates or places, out of which he sends and dispenceth fair and foul weather; foul weather cometh out of the South, and fair out of the North.

Out of the North cometh fair weather.

צפן *abscondit occultavit, hinc* צפון *septentrio aquilo, quasi absconditus quia sol ibi multo per annum tempora ibi non conspiciatur.*

The Hebrew word rendred *North*, signifieth *hiding*, because the remote parts of the *North* are much hidden from the Sun, a great part of the year being quite dark; and therefore the Northern Climate may well be called the *hidden part* of the world. Some put a Question upon those words of *David* (Psal. 75. 6.) *Promotion comes neither out of the East, nor out of the West, nor from the South*: Here are three of the foure Winds specified, and it is said, *Promotion* comes from neither of them. But why is it not also said, that *Promotion* comes not from the *North*? that's the question. I answer, It were answer enough to say, that we ought not to put questions curiously about such things; it should satisfie us that the Spirit of God is pleased to say it is so, and no more. Yet some tell us, the reason why it is not said, *Promotion* cometh not from the *North*, is, because indeed it cometh out of the *North*, which, say they, is intimated in the Hebrew word for the *North*, which signifies *hidden* or *secret*. *Promotion* comes not from the *East*, nor *West*, nor *South*, but from the *North*, (saith this Author) it comes from the *North* in a figure or mysterie, that is, it comes from some hidden providence or secret hand, which many take no more notice of, than we do of the furthest part of the *North*. God promotes many in this world to power, and sends them great prosperity, we see not how or which way: The causes and contrivances of it are hidden close, and in the breast of God. This also is a truth; in that sence we may say, *Fair weather cometh from the North*. Promotion is visible, but the manner of it is a secret, we see not the causes for which, nor the wayes in which it cometh. It is enough to touch these niceties, and to touch them can do no hurt, while the matter arising from them, hath the clear consent of, and is harmonious with o-

ther

ther plain places of Scripture. *Fair weather cometh out of the North*, and (as it followeth)

With God is terrible Majeſty.

This is the *Epiphonema*, the exulting concluſion of both theſe verſes, yea, of *Elihu's* large diſcourſe concerning the works of God in Naturalls. As if *Elihu* had ſaid, *All theſe things God doth*; and tell me then, *is not terrible Majeſty with God?* in God, or with God is *terrible Majeſty*. The word which we render *Majeſty*, comes (ſay Grammarians) from a root which ſignifies *to confeſs, to acknowledge, to celebrate*, becauſe Majeſty, Greatneſs, or Excellency is and ought to be much acknowledged, confeſt, and celebrated: The word notes in general, any laudable or praiſe-worthy thing. With God all that is, which is worthy to be and ought to be commended, praiſed, honoured by men and Angels. We tranſlate well, *With God is Majeſty*: Others, *With God is praiſe*. *Jacob* ſaith of *Judah*, the Kingly Tribe (*Gen.* 49. 8.) *Thou art he whom thy brethren ſhall praiſe*. The Vulgar Latine expreſſeth it thus; *With God is fearfull praiſe*. Some read the words as a Doxology, or giving of glory unto God, not as we, *With God is terrible Majeſty*, but, *unto God be reverent or terrible Majeſty*; that is, let the Glory and Majeſty of God be acknowledged in all theſe things, which have been ſpoken of, in all thoſe ſtrange changes and impreſſions which he works in the air, and which are obvious unto the eyes of the Children of men. *With God is Majeſty, with God is praiſe*, or *unto God be praiſe* for all his works; and not only praiſe and Majeſty, but

הוד *celſitudo majeſtas*; *a* ידה *quidem dedu unt, quod eſt confiteri, celebrare, laudare.*

ἔτι τῷ θεῷ μεγάλη ἡ δόξα. *Theod.* περὶ δὲ θεοῦ φοβεροσάτους. *Symmach: Ad deum formidolo a laudatio.* Vulg:

Terrible Majeſty,

Majeſty to be feared, to be reverenced, to be dreaded, to be trembled at. *With God is terrible Majeſty.*

Hence note; Firſt,

Majeſty belongs eminently unto God.

With God is Majeſty. As the Scripture, ſpeaking of power, ſaith, *Power belongeth unto God* (Pſal. 62. 11.) that is, properly, and fundamentally all power is in God; what-ever power is in the Creature, it is but a derivative from Gods power. So Majeſty is originally and fundamentally in God; what-ever the Majeſty of

of the Kings and Princes of this world is, it is but a ſtream, a ray iſſuing from the Majeſty of God, or, as the Greek verſion hath it, from his *Magnificence*. We may diſcern the Majeſty of God in every thing that he is, or is ſpoken of him; The Majeſty of God is in his Greatneſſe, his is a *Great Majeſty*; The Majeſty of God is in his Highneſſe, *his is a High Majeſty*; The Majeſty of God is in his honour, his is a *moſt honourable Majeſty*; the Majeſty of God is in his Word, he ſpeaks with Majeſty, *his is a moſt Majeſtical Word*; the Majeſty of God is in Works, Majeſty is ſtampt and printed upon all that he doth. What ſhall I ſay? there is Majeſty in the Wiſdom of God, and Majeſty in the Juſtice of God, and Majeſty in the Goodneſs of God, and Majeſty in the Power of God, there is Majeſty in the Love of God, and there is Majeſty in the Wrath of God, there is Majeſty in the Truth and Faithfulneſs of God; every thing God hath, hath a Majeſty in it; therefore he is ſaid (*Pſal.* 93. 1.) *to be clothed with Majeſty.* (*Pſal.* 96. 6.) *Honour and Majeſty are before him. I*, ſaith *David* (*Pſal.* 145. 5.) *will ſpeak of the glorious honour of thy Majeſty, and of thy wonderous works.* Everywhere the Scripture ſets forth the Majeſty, the wonderful Majeſty of God.

μεγαλωσύνη. *Magnificentia.* 70.

Note, Secondly;

Gods Majeſty is a terrible Majeſty.

The Majeſty of Kings is dreadful and terrible; but I may ſay, the Majeſty of Kings, the Majeſty of *Solomon*, and of *Ahaſhuerus*, the Majeſty of *Nebuchadnezzar*, and of *Alexander*, either, firſt, in their Robes; or, ſecondly, in their Buildings; or, thirdly, in their Feaſtings; or, fourthly, in their Followers and Attendants (which four do chiefly hold out the Majeſty of Princes) is but a mean thing, a very little thing, a nothing, in compariſon of the Majeſty, the Glorious Majeſty, the terrible Majeſty of God: His is a terrible Majeſty indeed. And therefore they are rebuked (*Iſa.* 26. 10.) *Who will not behold the Majeſty of the Lord.* What? not behold ſuch a dreadful Majeſty! ſuch a terrible Majeſty! The Scripture ſets forth not only the Majeſty, but the terribleneſs of the Majeſty of God; read at leiſure, (*Deut.* 7. 21. *Nehem.* 9. 32. *Pſal.* 47. 2.)

There-

Therefore ſay unto God, how terrible art thou in thy works! (Pſ. 66. 3.) Say this unto God, for (*verſ.* 5.) *He is terrible in his doings toward the children of men*, even to all ſorts of men, to the great as well as to the ſmall, to the high as well as to the low, to Princes as well as to the People (*Pſal.* 76. 12) *He is terrible to the Kings of the earth.* God is terrible in his Majeſty to thoſe who have the moſt terrible majeſty. And as the Lord can appear terrible out of all places, ſo he is moſt *terrible out of his holy places* (*Pſal.* 68. 35.) that is, terrible Judgments are ſent by God out of his Sanctuaries or holy places, upon all them who prophane or deſpiſe, who pollute or abuſe his holy things. Take theſe two Inferences from the conſideration of the terrible Majeſty of God.

Firſt, *We need not fear the terribleneſs of any creature, while we have the terrible Majeſty of God with us.* As he hath been, ſo ſtill he is (as the Prophet ſpake, *Iſa.* 25. 4, 5.) *A ſtrength to the poor, a ſtrength to the needy in his diſtreſs, a refuge from the ſtorm, a ſhadow from the heat, when the blaſt of the terrible ones is as a ſtorm againſt the wall.* And therefore the Prophet concluded in the latter end of the 5th verſe, *The branch of the terrible ones ſhall be brought low.*

Secondly, If God hath ſuch terrible Majeſty, then, as it is a comfort to his people againſt the terrible ones, ſo what a terrour ſhould this be to thoſe who are not his people, eſpecially to thoſe who are openly rebellious, who kick againſt his Majeſty, and will not behold with reverence the Majeſty of the Lord! Let them remember, *With God is terrible Majeſty.* The Prophet foretels a day, wherein the Majeſty of the Lord will terrifie the moſt potent ſinners, and make them at their wits end (*Iſa.* 2. 10, 12, 19, 21.) *Enter into the Rock, and hide thee in the duſt, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his Majeſty. For the day of the Lord of hoſts ſhall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he ſhall be brought low; it ſhall be upon the Cedars of Lebanon*, &c. that is upon thoſe that are high like the Cedars of *Lebanon*, and ſtrong like the Oaks of *Baſhan*: *And they ſhall go into the holes of the Rocks, and into the caves of the earth*, &c. And why all this? the Text anſwers (*verſ.* 19.) *For fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his Majeſty, when he ſhall ariſe to ſhake terribly the earth.* O the terribleneſs of Gods Majeſty, to

to all thoſe who tremble not at his Majeſty! to the proud, who are lifted up in their own thoughts, who are high in their own imaginations! yea, the Majeſty of the Lord will be terrible to all impenitent ſinners in that day, I may ſay, more diſtinctly, in theſe four dayes.

Firſt, In the day of Conſcience, or when their own Conſciences are a terrour to them. How ſad is it for a man to have God and his own Conſcience terrible to him at once! When ſinners are awakned, when God ſets their ſins in order before them, they are a terrour to themſelves, as it is ſaid of *Paſhur* (*Jer.* 20. 3.) *The Lord hath not called thy name Paſhur, but Magor Miſſabib*, that is, *fear round about; I will make thee a terror to thy ſelf*, thy own Conſcience ſhall be terrible to thee. A man had better fall into the hands of the moſt cruel Tyrants in the World, than into the hands of his own Conſcience. But when a man is a terrour to himſelf, then to have the Lord a terrour to him likewiſe, to have God appearing in terrible Majeſty, how dreadful is it! *The awakened Conſcience of a ſinner earrieth in it, as a thouſand witneſſes, ſo a thouſand terrours; and God in his anger is more terrible than a thouſand conſciences.*

Secondly, *God is terrible to ſinners*, in the day of outward trouble, when, as *David* ſpeaks (*Pſal.* 65. 5.) *By terrible things in righteouſneſs he anſwereth the prayers of his People.* When God is doing terrible things in the World, how miſerable is their caſe, to whom God alſo is a terrour in that day! A godly man when God is doing the moſt terrible things, *ſhaking Heaven and earth*, and (as it were) pulling the world about our ears, yet, becauſe he finds God at peace with him, he is well enough. But as for impenitent ſinners, when God is doing terrible things, what will become of them? I may beſpeak them in the words of the Prophet (*Iſa.* 10. 3.) *What will ye do in the day of your viſitation, and in the deſolation which ſhal come from far? to whom will ye flee for help, and where wil ye leave your glory?* As if he had ſaid, what or what can be a comfort to you, when God is a terrour to you? And therefore, another Prophet fore-ſeing ſuch a terrible day coming, makes this earneſt deprecating prayer (*Jer.* 17. 13.) *O Lord, be not thou a terrour to me in the evil day.* I know an evil, a terrible day is at hand, but Lord I beg this of thee, that thou wilt not be a terrour to me in that day; if men ſhould be a terrour to me, and God a terrour too,

too, it would be inſupportable. Yet thus it will be with the unrighteous, when God doth terrible things in righteouſneſs, and ſuch things he will do in the latter dayes. Take heed, leſt God appear *with terrible Majeſty to you*, in ſuch a day.

Thirdly, How terrible is God to impenitent ſinners (when awakened) in the day of death! What is Death? In this Book Death is called *The King of Terrours*. Now, if when Death is making its approaches to a perſon, who lives in a contempt of the wayes and word of God, if when his breath ſits upon his lips, ready to depart, and the King of Terrours is ready to tear his caul, and to rend his heart-ſtrings aſunder, if then, I ſay, God appears in terrible Majeſty, what condition will ſuch a one be in? To have Death the King of Terrours, and the Living, the ever-living God in terrible Majeſty falling upon a poor creature at once, is a thouſand deaths at once.

Fourthly, What will ſinners do in the day of judgment? that will be a terrible day indeed. The Apoſtle (2 *Cor.* 5. 10.) having ſaid, *We muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, to receive according to what we have done in the body, whether good or bad*; preſently adds, *knowing therefore the terrour of the Lord, we perſwade men*; that is, knowing how terrible the Lord will be to impenitent ſinners, to all whom he finds in their ſins, knowing this terrour of the Lord, and how terrible the Majeſty of the Lord will be to ſuch, in that day, *we perſwade men*, we do all we can to pluck them out of their ſins, and turn them to God in Chriſt Jeſus, who ſaves his people from their ſins; for, to be ſure, that will be a moſt dreadful day to ſinners. Thus the Majeſty of God will be terrible to the wicked and ungodly, eſpecially in theſe four dayes. Only they who fear the Lord and take hold of his name by faith, ſhall be able to ſtand before his terrible majeſty. God will not be a terrour, but a comfort, to them that fear him in every evill day.

Further, the word (as was ſhewed before) ſignifies not only *Majeſty*, but *Praiſe*, *With God is terrible praiſe, dreadful praiſe.*

Hence note, Firſt;

The Lord is moſt praiſe worthy.

With the Lord is praiſe. The Pſalmiſt every where ſets forth the

the praiſe-worthineſs of God, and preſſeth this duty upon us. I ſhall not ſtay upon it, only remember, *with the Lord is praiſe*, that is, he is to be praiſed. And from the attribute of his praiſe, or that, *with the Lord is terrible praiſe*,

Note Secondly;

Even in thoſe things which the Lord doth moſt graciouſly for us, and is to be highly praiſed by us (even in theſe) *he is to be feared, dreaded, and reverenced.*

God is to be praiſed, not only with joy and thankfullneſs, but with fear and reverence; *for with him is terrible praiſe.* It is the expreſs word of *Moſes*, in his ſong after the deſtruction of the *Egyptians* in the Red Sea (*Exod.* 15. 11.) *Who is a God like unto thee, glorious in holines, fearful in praiſes?* We ſhould not be affraid to praiſe God, no, we ſhould be moſt forward to praiſe him, but we ſhould have a holy fear upon our hearts, when we praiſe him. Praiſe is the work of heaven, from whence fear ſhall for ever be baniſhed; there will be *perfect love*, and *perfect love Caſts out fear*, (1 *Joh.* 4. 18.) What-ever fear hath torment in it (as all fear out of Chriſt hath) we ſhall have nothing to do with in that bleſſed life: And even in this life, praiſe, which is the work of heaven on earth, ſhould be performed with ſuch a ſpirit of love, & joy as is without all baſe, tormenting fear; we ſhould have ſo much love to God in, and for all the good things he doth, for our ſoules eſpecially, ye and for our bodyes too, in dealing out daily mercies, that it ſhould caſt out all that fear which hath torment in it. Yet there is a fear which ſhould poſſeſs our ſpirits while we are praiſing God, a fear of reverence I mean, which fear (I doubt not) will remaine in heaven for ever; Glorified Saints ſhall praiſe God with that fear, that is, having an everlaſting awe of the Majeſty of God upon their hearts. *He is fearful in praiſes*; and therefore let us ſo praiſe him, as remembering our diſtance, ſo praiſe him, as to be affraid of miſcarrying in the duty, and ſo inſtead of praiſing, diſpleaſe him, in ſtead of honouring, grieve him. This duty of praiſe is very dreadful. The Pſalmiſt ſaith, *there is mercy, or forgiveneſs, with thee, O Lord, that thou mayſt be feared* (*Pſal.* 130. 4.) Not only is the Lord to be feared in his wrath, and in the exe-

cutions of his justice, but he is to be feared in his mercy, & in that greatest expression of his favour towards us, the forgivness of our sins. When we are in the highest exaltations of the mercy of God, and of the God of our mercies, yet then should our hearts be affected with his fear. It is both our duty and our commendation so to fear God, as not to sin against him, or to be kept from sinning against God by the fear of God, that is, lest God should punish us for our sins, and give us to eat the bitter fruit of our own evil doings: But to fear God, because we hear, and are assured, that he is ready to pardon our sins, especially, to fear him when he hath given us a comfortable assurance, that our sins are pardoned; or, even then to be filled with the fear of his great and reverend Name, when we are actually praising him, and magnifying his free grace in Christ, for the pardon of them; this shewes a truly gracious spirit indeed. *With God is terrible Majesty, and with God is terrible praise*; he is at once to be praised and feared. All this *Elihu* would fix upon the heart of *Job*, from the consideration of the works of God, his providencial works, in the Air; how much more should this fear affect us, when we behold his terrible works of providence upon the Earth? turning the world, as it were, upside down, by the wonderful vicissitudes and revolutions which his hand brings to pass, respecting either Persons and private Familyes, or whole Kingdomes and Nations. *With God is terrible Majesty.*

JOB,

JOB, Chap. 37. Vers. 23, 24.

23. *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out; he is excellent in Power, and in Judgement, and in plenty of Justice: He will not afflict.*

24. *Men do therefore fear him: He respecteth not any that are wise of heart.*

THese two Verses conclude the whole discourse of *Elihu* with *Job*. The 23d verse is Doctrinal, the 24th is the Use or Application of the Doctrine.

In the 23d verse we have a four-fold Doctrine held out concerning God.

First, The Doctrine of his Incomprehensibleness, *We cannot find him out.*

Secondly, Of his Power, *He is the Almighty, he is excellent in Power.*

Thirdly, Of his Righteousness, he excells *in Judgement, and plenty of Justice.* But though he is thus full of Justice, yet he is also very Gracious, and therefore,

Fourthly, We have the Doctrine of his Mercy and Tenderness towards the Creature in the last words of the Verse, *He will not afflict.* God is infinitely above man in Power and in Wisdom, yet he never useth either the one or the other to the oppression or wrong of any man; *He will not afflict.* This is a very suitable peroration of the whole Narrative or matter declared, which *Elihu* had so long insisted upon.

And having laid down this four-fold Doctrine concerning God, he shews us the use of it in the 24th verse, where we have a practical Inference from what was before asserted concerning God: *Men do therefore fear him*, or, *therefore men ought to fear him.* As if he had said, Seeing God is thus incomprehensible, thus powerful, seeing he is thus excellent in Judgement, & in plenty of Justice, as also in Goodness and Mercy; *therefore good men do, and all men should fear him* This is a very natural and undeniable Inference, yet *Elihu* doth not leave it bare, but adds a strong inforce-

ments

men: in the close of the verse, why all men, the greatest of men, the wisest of men should fear God, *For he respecteth not any that are wise in heart.* The wisest, the greatest of men cannot carry it with God, by their wisdom or policy, by their greatness or power, therefore let them fear him. This is the sum and scope of these two verses.

Vers. 23. *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.*

That is, He is unsearchable and incomprehensible. The Original strictly read, is, *The Almighty, we cannot find him out. The Almighty*, is a *Nominative absolute*, as Grammarians speak; we supply that word (*Touching*) As if he had said, should we enter upon a discourse of the Almighty, we cannot find him out. *Touching the Almighty.* That, God is Almighty, and what the word *Shaddai*, here rendred Almighty, doth import, hath been shewed and opened already in other places of this Book, especially in the fifth Chapter at the 17th verse, and in the eighth Chapter at the 3d and 5th verses; thither I refer the Reader for further satisfaction in that matter, and pass from it here; *Touching the Almighty*

Omnipotens nominativus absolute positus Pisc.

We cannot find him out.

This also I shall pass over in a word, having spoken to it more fully (*Chap.* 11. 7.) where *Zophar* puts this Question, *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find him out unto perfection?* In which Questions, *Zophar* challenged *Job*, or any man else, to set their understandings upon the tenters, to put all their abilities to the utmost stretch, to find out God if they could, being assured they could not find him out unto perfection. So then, this assertion in the Text, *We cannot find him out*, bearing the same sence with those Questions, I shall not stay upon it. Only,

Note;

God cannot be compast by the enquiries of man.

Touching the Almighty, we have but this to say of him, *We cannot say much of him*, or, *how much soever we say of him, we say but a little of what he is*, or *of what may be said of him, for we cannot find him out.* We may find God, but we cannot find him out. God is to be

be found by every humble, faithful seeker of him. The Prophet (*Isa.* 55. 6.) calls us to that duty of seeking with an assurance of finding, *Seek ye the Lord whilst he may be found*; and so doth *David* (*Psal.* 32. 5.) *For this*, that is, for pardon of sin, for grace and mercy, or, *for this*, that is, upon the experience which I have had of thy readiness, O Lord, to pardon my sins, even as soon as I confessed and acknowledged them, *for this* (I say) *shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found.* God may be found to do us good, and shew us mercy, when we seek him rightly; there is a finding time, or a time while God may be found. Some give no other limit to this *while*, or finding time, than the limit of this life; And to be sure if he be not found while we are in this Life, he can neither be sought nor found after this Life. Yet more strictly, to *seek him while he may be found* (as one of the Rabbins glosseth that place) is to seek him before the Decree comes forth, as the Prophet *Zephany* speaks (*Chap.* 2. 2.) It is possible we may seek God, and seek him too late, and then there's no finding of him; Only they shall seek and find him, who seek him in the finding time, and they who do so shall certainly find, as was said before, God ready to do them good, and shew them mercy.

Dum adhuc in hac vita estis. Rab. Jonath. *Deus invenire potest ubique & quovis tempore ante obsignata decreta.* Abenezra.

But how much soever, or how early soever we seek him, we cannot find him out, that is, we cannot find out how good, how merciful God is, or the utmost extent of his goodness and mercy, which *Zophar* in the place before cited, calleth a *finding of him out to perfection.* I may give you a five-fold Negative to them wherein God cannot be found out.

First, We cannot find him out as to the infiniteness of his Essence and Being, that's beyond the line of a created Understanding.

Secondly, We cannot find him out, as to the excellency of his Attributes, or the manner of his being; who can tell how wise God is, how holy, how just, how powerful, how good! We may easily find his divine perfections all the world over, we may find them in every leaf of the book of the Scripture, yea, in every leaf of the book of the Creature, but we cannot find them out any where to perfection.

Thirdly, We cannot find out the depth of his Counsels. God hath some (*Arcana*) secrets which he hath reserved in his own power

power, as Chriſt told his diſciples in the firſt of the *Acts* (*verſ.* 6.) when they would needs be prying into that ſecret of his counſel, *the time of reſtoring the kingdom to Iſrael*. There are many counſels of God lockt up in his own bozom, which we cannot find out, nor muſt we be bold and curious in ſearching into them.

Fourthly, The Lord cannot be found out, no not in his works of Providence, which are acted outwardly, or by which he brings forth his counſels to act (*Pſal.* 77. 19.) *His foot-ſteps are not known*; not only are not any of his ſecret counſels known, but ſome of his very foot-ſteps, his treadings, his goings are not fully known. God goeth ſo that we cannot find where he goeth, he leaves no track (as we ſay) behind him (*Rom.* 11. 33.) *How unſearchable are his Judgments* (not only his counſels, but, *how unſearchable are his Judgments*) *and his ways paſt finding out*. That's the very expreſſion of the text. There are many providences of God, which we find and feel, which we ſee, and cannot but ſee, yet we cannot find them out, that is, we are not able to give a direct anſwer why God doth this or that, nor how this or that was done. Conſider that Scripture (2 *Chron.* 31. 20, 21.) where we have a moſt ſingular character of *Hezekiah*, and of his government; *Thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good, and right, and truth, before the Lord his God; and in every work that he began in the ſervice of the houſe of God, he did it with all his heart, and proſpered*. So the 31th chapter concludes; yet the 32d begins thus, *After theſe things, and the eſtabliſhment thereof, Sennacherib King of Aſſiria came and entred into Judah, and encamped againſt the fenced Cities*. One would have thought, *Hezekiah* being thus zealous for the Reformation of the Church of God, in *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*, and having done all that concerned it with a perfect heart, that ſurely ſuch a Prince ſhould have lived in peace and proſpered all his dayes; yet, preſently his Kingdome was invaded by a potent enemy, *Sennacherib* comes againſt him, and fills him, and all his people, with fear of utter ſubverſion. This was a ſecret of providence, very hard to find out, a depth, which who can fathome? That when a good King with his Counſel, had been indeavouring a true Reformation, and that with a perfect heart, he ſhould preſently ſee war at his gates. *Solomon* ſaith (*Pro.* 16. 7.) *When a mans ways pleaſe the Lord, he makes his enemies to be*

be at peace with him: Yet it was no ſooner ſaid of King *Hezekiah* that his wayes pleaſed the Lord, but the very next paragraph of his Chronicle reports an enemy making war upon him.

Fifthly, Take this alſo; We cannot find out God in the diſpenſations of his Free Grace in the Goſpel; there are ſuch mazes, ſuch myſteries of love, and goodneſs, and kindneſs in Jeſus Chriſt, as (though it be our duty to be ſearching after them, and in them, all our dayes, though we ought to be continually digging in thoſe golden Mines, to find out the treaſures hidden there, yet) we can never find them out. Therefore the Apoſtle (*Epheſ.* 3. 8) calls them, *The unſearchable riches of Chriſt*; not, *unſearchable*, becauſe it is unlawful to ſearch after them, but, *unſearchable*, becauſe when we have ſearched to the utmoſt we cannot find them out; as he ſpeaks in the cloſe of that chapter; *that we may be able to comprehend with all Saints, the height and depth, and length, and breadth, and to know the love of Chriſt that paſſeth knowledge*. Under all theſe conſiderations (and many, many more) God is paſt finding out. Whence take three brief Inferences.

Firſt, *Do not ſearch too far* (that is, beyond what is written) *into the counſels of God, no nor into the works of God*. For though, as it is ſaid (*Pſal.* 111. 2.) *the works of God are great, ſought out by all them that have pleaſure therein*; yet they that have the greateſt pleaſure in them, cannot in all points find them out. It is our duty to ſearch the works of God, but to think we can find out the bottom of his works would be our ſin.

Secondly, If the Almighty cannot be found out, no not in his works of providence, then, *Take heed of cenſuring or finding fault with his works*. Shall we cenſure what we cannot know, and find fault with that which we cannot find? He that cenſures what another doth, ſhould firſt have the full compaſs of what he doth, and be able to look quite thorow it, which the moſt eagle-eyed ſoul in the world cannot, as to what God doth in this world. And therefore though you ſee no reaſon for what is don, do not complain, for there may be a reaſon for the doing of it, which you do not ſee; and the reaſon is often ſuch, and lyes ſo deep, that you cannot ſee it. And know this is reaſon enough, why you ſhould forbear cenſuring what is done, becauſe God doth it, though you can give no other reaſon why it is done.

Thirdly, *If God be paſt finding out in his works, and much more*

in himself, then be not so much as discontented with his works. You are not yet come to the bottom, you have not seen the last man born (as we say) you know not what God will make of it, till he hath done all; therefore take heed of murmuring and discontent, (*Zech.* 2.13.) *Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord, for he is risen out of his holy habitation.* Though his rising be visible, yet we cannot see all the concernments and intendments of his rising; therefore be silent altogether from fear and discontents, and though not from all enquiries about it, yet from a presumption of finding out all by enquiries: For, *As touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.* That's the first.

שגיא כח *He is excellent in power.*

That's the second. Mr. *Broughton* reads, *He is huge of strength.* The word rendred *excellent*, properly signifies, *to encrease.* There is no encrease of the strength of God; what he is, he ever was, and ever will be; there is neither encrease nor diminution of his strength. But because things which are alwayes encreasing grow to a huge bigness and strength, therefore he is said to *encrease in strength*, or (as our translation imports) to *excel in power.* He that excels in power is excellent in power. The word rendred *power*, implieth the power of doing (the Greeks call it Δύναμις) or, of activity, a power put forth in working; he is excellent in power, that is, in ability to do whatsoever he pleaseth; and when 'tis said *he is excellent in power*, in this kind of power, it notes, that the power of God in doing, doth wonderfully excel all that ever he hath done. The effects or acts of the power of God are nothing, as I may say, to the faculty of his Power; he can do more than he hath done: He is so far from having over-acted himself, I mean from having done more than he can do again (which hath been the case of many mighty men, and may be the case of any man, how mighty a doer soever he is) that he can do infinitely more than he hath done, if he himself pleaseth; he is excellent in power, or of excelling power. I have (as was lately said) opened this point, of the power of God, in other places of this Book, whither I refer the Reader; yet taking the power of God (as the word is properly here intended) for his working power,

Ejus virtus in infinitum excedit omnes effectus suos. Aquin.

Note;

Note;

The working power of God is excellent, so excellent that it exceeds the apprehension of man.

There is a two-fold power of God, and in both he is excellent.

First, His commanding power, his power of Soveraignty, or Authority; that's a most excellent power, 'tis a power over all, whether things or persons.

Secondly, His power of working or effecting that which he commands. Some have a power of commanding, yet want a power of working, they want a power to effect that which they command: but whatsoever God hath a mind to command, he hath an hand to effect and bring it about; he can carry on his work through all the difficulties and deficiencies which it meets with in or by the creature; He can do his work though there be none to help him in it, though all forsake him, and with-draw from his work; yea, he often worketh though there be not so much as an Intercessor to move him to work (*Isa.* 59.16.) *He saw that there was no man* (to do any thing) *and wondered that there was no Intercessor* to entreat him to do somewhat for them. Things were in a great exigency, and there was not only no man that would put forth a hand, but there was no man that would bestow a word for redress, no man would bespeak either God or men for help: What then? must the work stand still or miscarry? no, saith the text, *His own arm brought salvation unto him*, that is, set it ready at hand for him to bestow upon his people; or, his own arm brought that salvation to his people, which they greatly needed, and he graciously intended, though he had not the contribution of a word towards it from any creature here below, one or other. God alone is self-sufficient, and to man All-sufficient. Such is the working power of God, that he can work, not only when he hath but a little help, but when he hath no help at all.

Secondly, The excellency of the working power of God appears in this, that he can and will produce the desired effect, and bring his work to pass, though many, though all men oppose it and rise up against it, though they set both heart and hand, wit and will, power and pollicy, to cross, yea to cruth it. The Lord is so excellent in power, that he both can and will do his work through

all oppoſition; though mountains ſtand in his way, though rocks ſtand in his way, he will remove them, or work through them. (*Iſa.*43.13.) *I will work, and who ſhall lett it?* Neither ſtrength nor craft, neither multitude nor magnitude, neither the many nor the mighty can lett it, if the Lord undertake it. Take a double Inference from this.

Firſt, 'Tis matter of great comfort to all that fear God in their weakeſt condition and loweſt reduccments, when they are fatherleſs, and have none to help them. As the Lord is excellent in his working power, ſo he uſually takes that time, yea ſtayes that time, till his ſervants are under the greateſt diſadvantages, till they are at worſt, before he will put forth his power and work. The Apoſtle ſaith of himſelf (*2 Cor.* 12. 10.) *When I am weak, then am I ſtrong*, that is, then have I the ſtrength of the Lord coming in to my help. And as it is with reſpect to particular perſons, ſo to the whole *generation of his children, when they are weak, then are they ſtrong*, that is, then they have the ſtrong God, the God *excellent in power*, appearing and working for them.

Secondly, This alſo is a ſad word to all that ſtand in the way of Gods working power; His working power quickly works through all power, and can work it down. *Babylon* is a mighty powerful enemy, but (*Rev.* 18. 8.) we read of the downfal of *Babylon*, and that her ruine ſhall come as in one day: But, how ſhall this be effected? The anſwer is given in the cloſe of the verſe, *For ſtrong is the Lord God which Judgeth her.* Suppoſe there ſhould be no power in the world ſtrong enough to pull down *Babylon*, yea, ſuppoſe all the powers in the world ſhould ſtand up for *Babylon*; 'tis otherwiſe prophetied, for, *the Kings of the earth ſhall hate the whore and ſhall make her deſolate, and naked, and eate her fleſh, and burn her with fire*; but ſuppoſe, I ſay, all earthly power ſhould appear for, rather than againſt *Babylon*, yet this is enough for us to reſt in, *ſtrong is the Lord which Judgeth her. He is excellent in power*, and as it followeth,

In Judgment.

This comes in, leſt any ſhould think, becauſe God is ſo excelent in power, ſo mighty in ſtrength, that therefore he would carry things by violence or by meer force, as the ſons of men, the mighty *Nimrods* of the world ſometimes do: If they have ſtrength and

and power to do ſuch or ſuch things, they regard not Judgment nor Juſtice, they look not whether right or wrong; therefore *Elihu*, when he had ſaid, God *is excellent in power*, preſently adds, *and in Judgment*. As if he had ſaid, *Though the Lord excel all in power, and is able to cruſh the mighty yeſt as a moth, yet he will not oppreſs any by his power; the worſt of men ſhall find the Lord as much in judgment and righteouſneſs, as he is in ſtrength and power. And therefore, O Job, be aſſured, God hath not done thee any wrong, nor ever will.* This I conceive to be the ſcope of *Elihu* in the connexion of theſe two, The excellency of God in *Judgment*, as well as *in Power*.

But what are we to underſtand by *judgment*, in which *Elihu* ſaith God excells? In anſwer to this Querie I ſhall firſt ſhew that *Judgment* is taken four ways in Scripture, and then prove that God is excellent in Judgment, with reſpect to every one of them.

Firſt, Judgment *is an ability of judging*. A man of judgment, and a wiſe man are the ſame. When we ſay, ſuch a man, is a man of Judgment, or a judicious man, we mean, he is a prudent man, he is able to diſcern things that differ, he knows how to order, ſtate and determine doubtful things aright. In this ſence we are to underſtand it here, the Lord *is excellent in judgment*, that is, in wiſdome and prudence to ſet things right, and to give every one his right, he ſees clearly how to mannage all his affayres and purpoſes by righteous meanes to right ends. The prophet gives God the glory of this title expreſſely (*Iſa* 30.18.) *The Lord is a God of judgment: Bleſſed are they that wait for him.* That is, the Lord is infinitely furniſhed with wiſdom, he knows exactly, not only what ought to be done, but how and when to do it; therefore waite for him. And 'tis encouragement to waite, when we have a perſon of judgment and underſtanding, a diſcreet and prudent perſon to waite upon. God is a God of judgment, in this ſence, *therefore bleſſed are they that waite for him.*

Secondly, Judgement in Scripture is taken for that moderation, or due meaſure, which is obſerved in any thing that is done. This follows the former; for unleſs a man have a Judgment or true underſtanding in the thing it ſelf, he can never hit a right meaſure of it. Thus, I conceive, that Scripture is to be underſtood (*Math* 23.23.) where Chriſt denouncing or thundering out woes thick and threefold againſt the proud hypocritical Phariſees,

ſees, he tells them, *Ye pay tythe of Aniſe and Cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy*; that is, either they did not give a right judgment according to Law, or their legal Judgments were given with rigour, not at all attemper'd, mixt, and moderated with mercy. Of ſuch the Apoſtle *James* ſpeaketh (*Chap.* 2. 13.) *He ſhall have judgment without mercy that hath ſhewed no mercy, and mercy rejoyceth againſt Judgment.* In this ſence the Lord *is excellent in Judgment*; For as he hath wiſdome and underſtanding to ſee what is juſt & right, ſo in Judgment he remembers Mercy: His patience is great before he gives Judgment; and his moderation is great when he gives it. *He dealeth not with us according to our ſins, nor rewardeth us according to our iniquities,* (Pſal. 103. 10.) that is, his Judgments are not proportion'd to the greatneſs of our ſins and iniquities; *For* (as it followeth at the 11th verſe of that *Pſalme*) *as high as the Heaven is above the Earth, ſo great is his mercy towards them that feare him.* Therefore the Prophet brings in the Church praying thus (*Jer.* 10. 24.) *O Lord, Correct me* (I conceive it is not a direct prayer for Correction, but a ſubmiſſion to it: As if he had ſaid, I will not murmur, nor rebell againſt thy Correction; *O Lord, Correct me*) *but with Judgment*, that is, with due moderation: It cannot be meant of Judgment, as it notes the effect of divine diſpleaſure, but Correct me moderately, or, as another text hath it, *in meaſure*, as thou uſeſt to correct thy people. This meaning, is plain from the oppoſition in the next words, *Not in thine anger, leaſt thou bring me to nothing.* Anger tranſports men to do things undecently & without moderation; we quickly exceed our limits, if carried out in paſſion; and though, that anger which the Scripture attributes often to God, never tranſports him beyond the due bounds of his wiſdome and juſtice, yet when God is ſaid to do a thing in anger, it notes his going, as it were, to the utmoſt bounds of juſtice; this cauſed the Church to pray, O Lord, if the cup may not paſs from me, if it cannot be, but I muſt be corrected, then I humbly and earneſtly beg, thou wouldſt be pleaſed *to correct me in Judgment, not in anger, leaſt thou bring me to nothing.* What the Church prayed for here, the Lord promiſed elſewhere (*Jer.* 30. 11.) *I will not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in meaſure, and will not leave thee altogether unpuniſhed.* Thus God is excellent in Judgment: He abates the ſeverity

rity of his proceedings, and allayes the bitterneſs of the cup by ſome ingredients of mercy.

Thirdly, Judgment in Scripture is put for the reformation of things when they are out of order. In this ſence it is uſed (*John* 12. 31.) *Now is the Judgment of this world.* Our late Annotators tell us, that by Judgment is meant reformation: As if Chriſt had ſaid, *I am come to ſet all things in order, that have been out of order and diſjoynted in the Jewiſh Church, and every where elſe; Now is the Judgment of this world.* In this ſence God is excellent in Judgment, or he excells in this Judgment, that is, he is for reformation, he will ſet all things right, he will make crooked things ſtrait, he will make the rough places plain. *John* the Baptiſt came before Chriſt in this work, yet in this work Chriſt is before or exceeds *John* the Baptiſt. *The Lord* (Iſa. 4. 4.) *will purge away the iniquity of the daughter of Zion with a ſpirit of Judgment, and with a ſpirit of burning*, that is, with a reforming and a refining Spirit: And the Lord will *ſend forth this Judgment unto victory* (Matth. 12. 20.) that is, he will do it thorowly, he will overcome all the difficulties, and put by all the obſtacles which hinder the perfect reformation of things as well as of perſons. That's the importance alſo of that great promiſe (*Iſa.* 1. 25, 26.) *I* (ſaith the Lord) *will turn my hand upon thee* (or take thee in hand) *and purely purge away thy droſs, and take away all thy tinn*, (that is, all thoſe corruptions which have crept in upon thee) *& I will reſtore thy Judges as at the firſt, and thy Councellors as at the beginning*: Things and perſons are uſually beſt at firſt. *The new broom* (ſay we) *ſweeps clean.* As time conſumes all things here below, ſo it corrupts moſt things; and therefore when the Lord promiſeth to reſtore them to a primitive purity, he promiſeth the pureſt reſtauration; all which is ſumm'd up in the 27th verſe, *Sion ſhall be redeemed with Judgment*; which is not only, if at all, intended of a redemption by Judgment on her enemies, but by that reformation which God would work upon themſelves, in taking away their droſs and tinn, *Reſtoring their Judges as at the firſt, and their Councellors as at the beginning.* Such a Judgment is ſpoken of (*Iſa.* 30 22.) *Ye ſhall defile alſo* (that is, utterly diſgrace and deface) *the Covering of thy graven Images of Silver, and the Ornament of thy molten Images of Gold; thou ſhalt caſt them away as a menſtruous cloth, thou ſhalt ſay unto it, get thee hence.* This is the Judgment of reformation, which

God,

God hath and will further work among his people, till *Sion be built up in perfect beauty, and Jerusalem become the praise of the whole earth.* Thus also God is excellent both *in power* and *in Judgment.*

Fourthly, Judgment signifies those evills which God brings upon impenitent sinners; that's a very frequent notion of *Judgment* in Scripture, and the Lord is excellent in this Judgment; and that

First, Upon his own people, when they provoke him and sin against him (1 *Pet.* 4. 17.) *If Judgment begin at the house of God, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel.* There's Judgment beginning at the house of God, that is, God will bring evill upon his own house, the Church, even sore troubles and persecutions. The Lord will not spare them, who have been slight with him, forgetfull of him, formal in profession, or wanton and vaine in conversation. This is a great part of the Lords excellency in Judgment, he brings Judgment upon his own house. *The Lord*, saith the Prophet (*Isa.* 5. 16.) *shall be exalted in Judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness*, that is, in bringing his righteous Judgments upon *Israel*, his peculiar people. We find that Gospel Prophet *Isaiah* often interweaving the wyre and whipcord of corporal bondage, with the silk and scarlet thread of *Sions* deliverances.

Secondly, In Judgment towards his enemies (*Psal.* 149. 9.) *He will execute on them the Judgment that is written*, and that is no inconsiderable, nor easie Judgment. The servants of God may smart sorely under these Judgments, but the wicked and rebellious shall perish, and sink under them. How dreadfull is that profession or protestation which the Lord made by *Moses* (*Deut.* 32. 41.) *If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold of Judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me.*

Some, possibly, may object, Surely there is no such appearance of Gods excellency in Judgment upon the wicked of the world, the enemies of his name and wayes. It grew to a Proverb (*Mal.* 2. 17.) *Ye say, every one that doth evill is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them, or where is the God of Judgment?* Evill men seem to be good in the eyes of the Lord when they enjoy good; and if it be so, (said some) *Where is the God of Judgment?* I answer,

I answer, First, the Lord hath left testimony enough upon Record, and written it in the blood of many thousands, to justifie himself, that *he is excellent in Judgment*, by taking vengeance on the wicked. Did he not excell in Judgment upon the sinning Angels? (2 *Pet.* 2. 8. *Jude* 6.) was he not excellent in Judgment, when he destroyed the whole world for sin? when he burnt *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* with fire for sin? How many instances might I give of this from Scripture? God hath sufficiently declared himself excellent in this punitive Judgment.

I answer, Secondly, God indeed doth not presently execute Judgment upon all the wicked; we should rather be lead by sence than by faith, if he should do so, if he should smite sinners as soon as they provoke him; yea, if God should take that course, he must even break the world to peices, and destroy whole generations at once.

Thirdly, God suffers sinners a while, that his councels may be fulfilled; for though the wicked obey not the command of God, yet they fulfill the councel of God (*Acts* 4. 28.) and they do it chiefly when he withholdeth Judgment from them.

Fourthly, Unless the Lord did a little give stop to the execution of Judgment in this kind, it would neither appear how good, nor how bad some men are. Let some have but a little power in their hands, and the world at will, then you shall see whither they will go, and what they will do. And when bad men are suffered to go on unpunished, and to be a punishment to others, then it appears more fully how good some are, and that in a twofold respect. First, because they refraine from evill, though they see that they also possibly might do it (*impune*) and not suffer in this world. Secondly, because they hold fast both their profession and practise of Godliness, how much soever they suffer for it in this world from evill men.

Fifthly, God is executing Judgments upon wicked men, while he seems to spare them from judgment (*Pro.* 1. 32.) *The prosperity of fools slayeth them.* Some think a wicked man is highly favoured when he is in prosperity, no, that prosperity is his destruction, and destruction is Judgment in perfection. The table of a wicked man is made his snare, his full table furnes his heart, which is the soreest of all judgments. To be unsensible is worse than any punishment of sense; to be hardned or heartned in doing

evill, is more penall than the ſuffering of any evill. Now while wicked men eſcape the ſuffering of evill, they grow reſolved, that is, hardned and heartned in doing it, or to do it. Take *Solomons* obſervation or experience in the caſe (*Eccleſ.* 8. 11.) *Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not ſpeedily executed* (upon themſelves or others) *therefore the heart of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do miſchief.* So then, there are many inviſible judgments upon wicked men, when we ſee no hand touch them, nor judgment meet them; God gives them up to vile affections, and to a reprobate mind (*Rom.* 1. 26, 28.) to their own counſels (*Pſal.* 81. 12.) and to ſtrong delutions by others (2 *Theſ.* 2. 11.) There heavy loads of judgment may be on their hearts, upon whoſe backs we ſee not ſo much as a grain weight of judgment. Thus the Lord is excellent in judgment in all the notions of it; I have inſtanced foure.

Now, leſt any ſhould think that God at any time breaks the rule of juſtice in his zeale for this latter ſort of judgment, or while he is powring out vengeance upon the wicked, therefore it follows in the next place,

ורב צדקה *And in plenty of Juſtice.*

Juſtitia eſt conſtans & perpetua voluntas ſuum cuique tribuendi. Juſtin.

God executes great wrath upon ſinners, but there is great Juſtice, plenty of Juſtice in it. There is ſtore and abundance of juſtice and righteouſneſs in his moſt rigorous judgments. A little juſtice is a moſt precious thing; how precious then is plenty of juſtice! *Juſtice in it ſelf is the giving of every one his due*; and where juſtice is in any man, it conſtantly bends and enclines his heart to do ſo, his eſpecially with whom there is (as in God) plenty of juſtice. And indeed, what-ever God hath, he hath plenty of it; He hath mercy, and plenty of it, he is *plenteous in mercy* (Pſal. 103. 8.) *And with him is plenteous redemption*, (Pſal. 130. 7.) There is alſo plenty of juſtice in him.

Some men have no Juſtice at all in them; though their office and place be to do Juſtice, yet they have nothing of juſtice, no tincture of it in them; *They neither feare God nor regard man*, to do him any juſtice, as the unjuſt Judge is deſcribed (*Luk.* 18. 2.) and with moſt Juſtice is a very ſcarce Commodity, they have but a very little of it, and they diſtribute it very poorly and ſparingly. Where almoſt is the man to be found that hath plenty of juſtice in

in himſelf, and diſtributes it plentifully to others? There was ſurely a great ſcarcity of Juſtice in the Juſticers of *Jeruſalem*, when the Lord by his Prophet (*Jer.* 5. 1.) offered to pardon the whole City, if upon the ſending forth of his Writ of Enquiry, the name of any one man could be returned that executed Judgment. O that Dearth of Juſtice! and in what place may we hope to find plenty of juſtice among men, when ſo little of it was to be found in *Jeruſalem*, the City of God? yet this may comfort us, that though there be little of it in or among men, there is plenty of it in God. And that there is plenty of juſtice in God, I would demonſtrate thete five wayes.

Firſt, He hath plenty of juſtice, who deals juſtly with every man. God giveth every man his due, all his due, and nothing but his due. More diſtinctly, take this in two branches. Firſt, he that rewards all that are good, with good, not this or that man, not his kinſman, or his friend only, but every man that is good, with good, he hath plenty of Juſtice: Thus doth God. The reſpect which God hath to the perſons of good men, is like the reſpect which good men have to the commands of God, it is *univerſall*, he reſpects them all. As they give him plentifull obedience, having a reſpect to all his Commandements, ſo he gives them plentifull Juſtice, he hath reſpect to all their perſons, to all their workings, to all their wayes, which are holy, juſt, and good. Again, Secondly, He hath *plenty of Juſtice*, who puniſheth all that do evil, not winking at, nor ſparing friends or kindred. Surely then there is plenty of juſtice in God; for as he rewards all the good with good, ſo he rewards all evil men with evil; that's all the reward they ſhall have, and they ſhall have plenty of it (*Pſal.* 31. 23.) *He plenteouſly rewardeth the proud doer.* The proud ſhall have and drink up the laſt, the reſidue, the remainder, the very dregs of the bitter cup, of the cup of trembling, as the Hebrew elegancy uſed by the Pſalmiſt intimates. *Tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil; for there is no reſpect of perſons with God*, (*Rom.* 2. 9, 11.) As he will puniſh none but evil-doers, ſo he will puniſh them every one, except they repent.

Secondly, With the Lord is plenty of Juſtice, for he knows the whole Compaſs of Juſtice, he hath the clear Idea of it; in his underſtanding, he knows all the rules of it, or rather is the rule of it. All the rules of Juſtice came out from him, and are but the

ſignification of his own mind, therefore he muſt needs know them, and be well skilled in them. Some men have a good mind to do juſtice, yet have no plenty of it, becauſe they are unskilfull in the rule of it, the Lawes both of God and man. A Judge that is blind through ignorance, and hath not a gift of knowledge and underſtanding in the Law, faulters in doing, or is unfit to do Juſtice, as much as he that is blinded with gifts, or byaſs'd by relations and private paſſions; he that is blind the former way cannot have, and he that is blinded by any of the latter wayes will never do *plenty of Juſtice*. But as the Lord hath an infinitely clear eye as to the rule, ſo no gift can blind him, nor can any relation put out his eyes from ſeeing a fault, nor divert him from puniſhing it (*Iſa.* 27. 11.) *It is a people of no underſtanding* (either to do good, or to depart from evil) *therefore he that made them* (that's a neer relation) *will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them* (that's the ſame) *will ſhew them no favour*. As if the Lord had ſaid, *Juſtice ſhall be done, though the work of my own hands be undone by it*; There's plenty of juſtice. And as God knows the rule of the Law perfectly, and will not be turned aſide from it; ſo he knows the matter of fact perfectly, and cannot be miſled about that; Upon which miſtake ſome, who have great knowledge of the rule of the Law, yet do not plenty of juſtice: they often condemn the innocent, and acquit the nocent, becauſe they find not out the truth of their cauſe, but are miſinformed about it. But, *the Lord is a God of knowledg, by him actions are weighed*; he knows not only the matter of Law but the matter of fact too, and therefore with him *there is plenty of Juſtice*.

Thirdly, There muſt needs be plenty of Juſtice with God, becauſe he knows the ſpirit and heart with which every man acts, he knoweth whether a thing be done maliciouſly, or merely by a ſurprize of paſſion (Juſtice is guided much by that conſideration in ſome caſes) The Lord knows the heart, wherewith every thing is done, and the deſign or ayme of every man in doing it. As he will make manifeſt the Councels of the heart, at laſt to all, ſo now the Councels of the heart are manifeſt to him; therefore he muſt needs be plentiful in juſtice.

Fourthly, God is clothed with ſufficient power to execute juſtice, therefore with him there is plenty of it. Some have a good mind to do juſtice, they know the Law & the fact too, yet are ſhortned

ſhortned and ſtraitned in doing juſtice, becauſe they have not power, or are not able to carry it out againſt potent offenders, but are forced to forbear the doing of juſtice, becauſe at preſent they cannot. The doing of juſtice requireth ſtrength of hand, as well as ſtrength of Law, and integrity of heart. *David* had a good mind to do juſtice upon *Joab* (though neerly related to him) when he had, under a pretence of friendſhip, ſlain *Abner*; but he ſaw himſelf under a neceſſity of forbearance at that time, and therefore ſaid, *I am this day weak* (though anoynted King) *and theſe ſons of Zerviah be too hard for me*. But there are no ſons of *Zerviah* too hard for the Lord, he can call them to an account at any time: *David* knew that very well, and therefore he referred *Joab* to Gods Juſtice in the cloſe of that verſe (2*Sam.* 2. 39.) *The Lord ſhall reward the doer of evill according to his wickedneſs. Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be ſtrong in the dayes that I ſhall deal with thee?* ſaith the Lord by his Prophet (*Ezek.* 22. 14.) They cannot, therefore *with him is plenty of Juſtice*.

Fifthly, The Lord cannot but have plenty of juſtice, for his very nature is juſtice. Man doth that readily and plentifully which he doth naturally; it is as impoſſible for God not to do juſtice, as it is for him not to be. A man may be unjuſt, and yet be a man, but God cannot be God, and not do juſtly. Seeing then it is his nature to do juſtice, there muſt needs be plenty of juſtice with him: And how ſevere ſoever the judgments of God are, there is nothing but juſtice in them. *Juſtice, Juſtice, ſhalt thou follow*, was the command of God to the Judges of *Iſrael* by *Moſes*, that is, as we tranſlate, *that which is altogether juſt ſhalt thou follow* (Deut. 16. 20.) As that promiſe of *peace, peace*, notes plenty of peace (*Iſa.* 26. 3.) ſo this command of doing *Juſtice, Juſtice*, notes plenty of Juſtice. Certainly then the Lord himſelf will do juſtice plentifully. Juſtice, Juſtice will he do. Take two Inferences from this aſſertion.

Firſt, This truth is matter of comfort to, and ſweetly ſmiles upon the juſt, that the Lord hath plenty of juſtice in him; for then, doubtleſs, he will performe all his good words of promiſe to them. 'Tis the part of a juſt man to performe his word; God is faithful to his word, what-ever men are. It hath been ſaid, *If you would know what ſome men mean never to do, then look to their promiſes*.

Eorum quæ appetebat ne qui quam præ ſe ferebat, & eorum quæ dicebat ne quicquam facere volebat. Suidas de Tiberio.

promiſes. It was a very diſhonorable Character which *Suidas* gave of the *Romane* Emperour *Tiberius*; *He never made ſhew of having what he deſired, or had a mind to, nor ever minded to do what he had promiſed.* But God, the great God, is ſo true and juſt to his word or promiſe, that his people may take ſtrong conſolation from every word of promiſe. (*Tit.* 1. 2.) *In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promiſed.* No man could ever challenge God of any faylure in promiſe. There are four things aſcribed to God in Scripture, which may aſſure us that he will be juſt in performing all his promiſes. Firſt, He remembers them all (*Pſal.* 111. 5. *Pſal.* 115. 12.) Secondly, He is unchangeable and in one mind, (*Job* 23. 13, 14.) Thirdly, He is the Almighty, and ever furniſht with power to perform them. Fourthly, He is moſt faithfull, and will not deny nor falſifie them (*Heb.* 10. 23.)

Secondly, This truth hath a moſt dreadfull aſpect and frownes terribly upon the ungodly and unjuſt. That *God hath plenty of Juſtice*, Juſtice enough to beſtow among them all, is enough to confound them all; though they make a Covenant with death, and with hell are at agreement, yet their Covenant and agreement ſhall be diſſolved, (*Iſa.* 28. 15, 16.) The Scripture ſpeaks Juſtice often to ſinners, ſpecially to thoſe unjuſt ones, who *weigh the violence of their hands* (Pſal. 58. 1, 2.) that is, who oppreſs with a kind of exactneſs, who do not tumble it out palpably, or in a lump, but weigh it out, now a little, and then a little: The Lord knoweth how to deal with ſuch cunning perverters of Juſtice, and will at laſt make them acknowledge, both that themſelves had no juſtice in them, and that himſelf hath plenty of it. And who now, laying theſe five conſiderations together, will not acknowledge, that the Lord hath plenty of juſtice? But the inference which *Elihu* makes from it in the cloſe of the verſe, ſeems, if not a kind of denial, yet a great abatement of it, for having ſaid, *He is excellent in plenty of Juſtice*, the next words are,

He will not afflict.

This may ſeem at firſt hearing, a ſtrange connection; will he not afflict? how then hath he plenty of Juſtice? Doth not God afflict? who afflicts then? have men the power of affliction in their hands? or hath Satan the power of affliction in his hand? *Affliction cometh not forth of the duſt, neither doth trouble ſpring out of the ground*, ſaid *Eliphaz* (Chap. 5. 6.) Saith

Saith not the Scripture every where, affliction comes down from heaven, or that 'tis of God? did not *Job* ſay (*Chap.* 1. 21.) *The Lord hath taken*, that is, afflicted me, by taking away my all of this world? and doth not God himſelf ſay (*Pſal.* 89. 30, 31, 32.) *If his children forget my Law, I will puniſh their tranſgreſſion with a rod, and their iniquity with ſtripes?* How then ſaith *Elihu, God will not afflict?*

I anſwer, Firſt, In general, *Elihu* ſpeaks thus in anſwer to a doubt, or to remove a feare ariſing upon the whole, of what had been ſaid of God. For if God be ſuch a God, *ſo excellent in power, and in Judgment, and in plenty of Juſtice*, then ſurely our caſe is very ſad, may ſome ſay, who can abide to be neere or ſtand before ſuch a God? O, ſaith *Elihu*, feare not, *He will not afflict.* More particularly, I anſwer,

Firſt, Though God be excellent in Judgment, and plenty of Juſtice, yet it may be ſaid, *he will not afflict*, becauſe in ſome ſenſe, he hath not a will to afflict, or he doth not afflict with his will, that is, he delights not to afflict, he hath declared himſelf more ready to ſhew mercy, than to execute judgment. In one Prophet he ſaith, *I have no pleaſure in the death of him that dyeth* (Ezek. 18. 32.) and another Prophet ſaith of him, *He doth not willingly afflict, nor grieve the children of men* (Lam. 3. 33.) This Prophet was there bemoaning the greateſt affliction that ever befell the people of God, yet, ſaith he, *God doth not afflict willingly*, he doth not afflict with his heart, as the word there is expreſſed in the Margin; when he afflicts, it is as it were a work of his hand, not of his heart, yea a work that he would gladly rid his hands of. What once that cruel Tyrant *Nero* ſaid when he was to ſigne a Warrant for the Execution of an offender, *How glad ſhould I be if I could not write my name!* (This ſpake he, poſſibly, when his heart was as full of blood as it could hold) yet thus he ſpake to ſignifie a great unwillingneſs to afflict. This is moſt true of the great God; though he be a God of excellent power and judgement, and plenty of juſtice, yet he doth not afflict willingly; he could be glad, that he might never have an occaſion to afflict, that he might never be provoked to draw his ſword, no nor ſo much as to uſe his rod in this world.

Ex corde. Heb: *ex animo libens.* Vatabl:

O Quam vellem neſcire literas!

Secondly, It may be ſaid, *God will not afflict*, becauſe he never afflicteth without a juſt cauſe; his unlimited power never tempts

tempts him, nor doth any paſſion tranſport him to a deſire of taking undue revenge upon any; he hath plenty of Juſtice, and therefore cannot afflict, but when he ſees great reaſon for it. Did not our ſin call for our affliction, were there not ſome great provocation on our part, or ſome profit to come to us by it, we ſhould never hear of, nor feel his rod. The Apoſtle ſaith (*Heb.* 12. 9, 10.) *We have had Fathers of our fleſh, who for a few dayes chaſtened us after their own pleaſure*, they to eaſe themſelves, have put us to pain, but *the Lord doth it for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holineſs.* There is juſt cauſe we ſhould be afflicted, when we provoke God by ſin, or when he would purge us from our ſin, or make us more holy. And as it may be ſaid, *God will not afflict*, becauſe he doth not afflict us but when there is cauſe for it, ſo

Thirdly, Becauſe he doth not afflict us but when there is need (1 *Pet.* 1. 6.) nor more *than there is need*; we ſhall not be afflicted an hour longer, nor have a grain more of weight in the burden of our croſs, nor a drop more of gall and wormwood in the cup of our ſorrows than we have need of (*Iſa.* 27. 7, 8, 9.) *Hath he ſmitten him, as he ſmote thoſe that ſmote him? in meaſure, when it ſhooteth forth thou wilt debate with him.* As if it had been ſaid, he ſhall have no greater a meaſure than is both uſeful and needful; Firſt, to humble him for his ſin; ſecondly, to ſubdue and mortifie his ſin; thirdly, he ſhall have no more than is needful to exerciſe his graces, his faith and patience; no more, fourthly, than is needful to make him thankful for deliverance, and ſenſible of mercy when it comes. Thus, as God, who hath plenty of Juſtice, will not afflict us, but when there is need, ſo not more than is need.

Fourthly, It may be ſaid, He will not afflict, becauſe he doth not afflict us more than we can bear; he tenderly conſiders our ſtrength, what we are able to ſtand under, & how long we are able to ſtand under it; he will not break our backs nor our hearts (unleſs by godly ſorrow for, or from ſin) by affliction. *God* (ſaith the Apoſtle 1 *Cor.* 10. 13.) *is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it.* Hence when it is ſaid (*Lam.* 3. 33.) *He doth not afflict willingly*, &c. it followeth (*verſ.* 34.) *to cruſh under his feet all the priſoners of the earth.* The Lord makes many

many his priſoners, yet then his bowels are opened towards them, he will not cruſh, nor tread them down, as mire in the ſtreets. *I* (ſaith the Lord, *Iſa.* 57. 16.) *will not contend for ever*, &c. For (if I ſhould) *the Spirit ſhould fail before me, and the ſouls which I have made.* I know what your ſpirits can bear, and I will contend no longer than I know you are able to bear it. Hence that Promiſe (*Pſal.* 125. 3.) *The rod of the wicked ſhall not reſt upon the lot of the righteous, leaſt he put forth his hands to evil.* The Lord knows the rod may prevail over us ſo, as to put us upon the doing of evil, and therefore he will take order that it ſhall not.

Thus we may ſafely underſtand this aſſertion, *He will not afflict*, that is, he afflicts not willingly; he afflicts not till there is need, nor will he afflict more than needs, nor more than we are able, or himſelf will enable us to bear; he will either ſupport us under, or give us deliverance out of all our afflictions in due time.

I might hence, or from the whole, infer a double duty.

Firſt, Be Patient under affliction.

Secondly, Be Comforted in affliction.

For God doth ſo afflict, that he may be truly ſaid not to afflict, But having met with occaſions for the miniſtring of ſuch like counſels to the afflicted, from other paſſages in this book, it may ſuffice only to mind the Reader of them here.

This ſpake *Elihu* in the cloſe or peroration of his diſcourſe, to ſtir up *Job* to conſider all the dealings of God with him; he would have him ſit down with theſe four Doctrinal Concluſions upon his heart, that God is *Excellent in Power, and in Judgement, and in plenty of Juſtice, he will not afflict.* Surely he will not afflict more in meaſure, nor longer in time than is need, as *Job* ſeemed in his paſſion, to intimate and charge God, for which he had ſeveral reproofs before.

Thus far I have opened theſe words, as they ſtand in our tranſlation. There are two or three different readings, eſpecially of the latter part of the verſe, which would not be altogether omitted, and therefore I ſhall touch at them, and then proceed to the next and laſt verſe of this Chapter, which is alſo *Elihu's* parting word, or the concluſion of his large and cloſe diſcourſe with *Job.*

The firſt different reading is much inſiſted upon by ſome In-

terpreters. Take it thus; *The Almighty, whom we cannot find out, is great in power, but he will not afflict in judgment and plenty of justice.* This translation transposeth those words, which we place in the end of the verse, *he will not afflict*, to the middle of it, and it renders the copulative particle *And*, by the adversative *But*: This makes the sence of the whole verse more plain and easie than the former, as also to rise up more fully to the purpose of *Elihu*. As if he had thus summed up all that he spoke before, or had contracted it into this sum.

Omnipotens quem non assequimur amplius est virtute, sed judicio & mensuratione justitiæ non affliget. Merc.

Which things, seeing they are so, as I have declared, we may certainly conclude, that the Almighty is so full of majesty and power, that we are no way able to reach, compass and find him out: Yet notwithstanding he is so full of goodnesse and mercy, that he is very sparing towards men, and will not afflict them according to their demerits, nor up to the extremity of justice. This exposition holds out clearly that temperament of the power and justice, with the goodness and mercy of God, which *Elihu* undertook to demonstrate, at the fifth verse of the thirty sixth Chapter, and so forwards; *He is great in power, but he will not afflict in judgement.*

Quamvis sit potentissimus tamen homines ante creatos tanti facit ut non utatur omnipotentia sua ad eos summo jure & pro meritis eorum affligendos. Jun.

Take this note from it;

How great soever the power of God is, yet he doth not afflict sinful man according to the greatness of his power, nor the utmost line of his justice.

The Lord is full of mercy, full of sparing mercy, he spareth his people, *as a man spareth his own son that serveth him* (*Mal.* 3. 17.) And indeed if God should afflict in *plenty*, that is, in extremity of justice, what would become of the best, of the holiest of men? Who can withstand the power of the great God? who can stand in judgment before him, if he should *mark iniquities?* (*Psal.* 130. 3.) Woe to the most innocent man alive, if God should mark iniquities, and not forgive iniquities. And therefore it follows in the next or 4th verse of that Psalm, *But with thee is forgiveness.* As God is most bountiful in giving, so is he most merciful in forgiving. This holds the head of believing and repenting sinners above water, and keeps them from sinking into the bottomless gulfe of despaire, that they have a forgiving God to go unto, and that there is none like him in forgiving (*Mich.*

(*Mich.* 7. 18.) None forgiving so *freely* (*Isa.* 42. 25.) so *abundantly* (*Isa.* 55. 7.) none so constantly and continually as he. There is *forgiveness with thee*; 'tis a continued a perpetual act. Now because God pardons so freely, he doth not, he will not, he cannot because he will not, punish extreamly. *God dealeth with sinners in measure, because he dealeth with them in a Mediator.* Though he be great in power, yet he will not afflict according to the greatness of his power or the plenty of his justice.

Secondly, Some of the *Jewish* Doctors render the latter part of the verse thus; whereas we say, *He is excellent in judgement, and in plenty of justice, he will not afflict*, they say, *He will not afflict judgement and plenty of justice*; that is, as they give the glosse, *Though he be great in power, yet he will not pervert justice.* We may well say justice is afflicted, when it is perverted; and then justice is perverted, when any man is wronged, or when at any time the wronged, or wrongfully afflicted, are not righted and relieved. Thus God will not afflict justice. These translators do not joyn the word *afflict* (as we) to the person of man, but to the *justice* of God, or the actings of his justice. He is great in power, but he will not afflict, he will not oppress judgement and justice. This is doubtless a great truth in it self, yet I doubt whether it be the truth intended by *Elihu* in this place. Certainly, God will not do any man wrong, though he hath power enough, all power in his hand, yea, God will do all men right; though he be great in power, yet what affliction soever he layeth upon the creature shall be no affliction to justice or judgement, to that justice or judgement with which God is cloathed, and will declare by executing it among the children of men. But I pass this as over-nice.

Judicium & copiam justitiæ non affliget. i. e. jus non pervertet Merc. ex Rabbinis.

Thirdly, Others render thus, *He is excellent in power, and in judgement, and plenty in justice, he will not answer.* The word which we translate, *to afflict*, with some alteration in the Hebrew pointing, signifieth also *to answer*; and so the words carry a sence of the absolute soveraignty of God, who is so great *in power*, and *in judgement, and plenty of justice*, that he will not answer; that is, though men complain of his justice, or think he hath done them wrong, or at least is over-severe towards them, yet he will not come to an answer, he will give no man a reason of his wayes. Of this *Elihu* spake expresly (*Chap.* 33. v. 13.) *He giveth not an account*

Non respondebit. Tygur. *Probarem si esset* יַעֲנֶה *in fonte nunc eum sic* יַעֲנֶה *non potest aliter legi, quam affliget, vexat.* Drus. Merc.

count of any of his matters. God is ſo powerful that no man can call him to an account, and ſo juſt in the uſe or exercise of his power, that there is no reaſon why any ſhould. But though this alſo be a great truth, yet becauſe *Elihu* had aſſerted it fully before, as alſo becauſe this tranſlation is grounded upon a change in the ordinary pointing of the Hebrew word, from which I conceive, with others, we ought not eaſily to recede, therefore *I* ſhall not ſtay upon it.

Nor ſhall *I* more than mention that apprehenſion of ſome Rabbins, who thus give out a 4th ſence or interpretation of the words; whereas we ſay, *As touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out, he is excellent in power, and in judgement*, &c. They ſay thus, *although the Almighty be great in power and in judgment, and plenty of juſtice, yet we find him not ſo*; That is, we do not find him putting out the greatneſs of his power, or the exactneſs of his juſtice, in the commands wch he hath laid upon us, or in the duties wch he hath required of us; he doth not over-burthen us, nor exact hard things of us. And they inſtance in the rules which God gave about offerings and ſacrifices; he required (ſay they) of ſome only a turtle dove, or a pair of young pigeons, of others but a lamb, or a bullock, ſuch things he required for ſacrifice as were of eaſie price, and might eaſily be obtained, he did not put us upon the getting of ſtrange and rare beaſts, as Buffes, or Unicorns, or any ſort of creature which may put us to much paines in getting them, or to much expenſe in buying them. And as in theſe, ſo in other things God hath graciouſly condeſcended to our weakneſs, as appears every where in the Law. Thus the *Jewiſh* Writers make out their tranſlation: and though it be a truth, that in one ſenſe the Ceremonial Law was (as St *Peter*, in that council at *Jeruſalem* declared *Acts* 15. 10) *A Yoak, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear*, yet there was much favour mixed with it, which cauſed the Lord to appeale in that point to their own conſciences, or to make themſelves the Judges (*Mich.* 6. 3.) *O my people, what have I done unto thee, or wherein have I wearied thee? teſtifie againſt me.* And as God, though great in power, did not over-lay the *Jews*, ſo much leſs hath he over-laid us Chriſtians with duty (1 *Joh.* 5. 3) *His Commandements are not grievous.* And Chriſt ſaid of his yoke and burden (*Mat.* 11. 30) *My yoke is eaſie, and my burden is light.* Chriſt may lay what burdens he pleaſeth upon us, but he is not pleaſed to lay any grievous burdens upon us. This therefore is a truth

Omnipotentem non invenimus multum robore & judicio; Et tali ſit, tamen talem eum non experimur in mandatis ſuis, ut immodice nos oneret, aut immodicam a nobis exigat juſtitiam, &c. Rabbi Sele. moth & Ramkam.

truth, both as to them and us, yet I conceive it beſide the deſign of *Elihu* in this place, and I only mind the Reader of theſe different interpretations, of all which ſome good improvement may be made. So much of this verſe: The whole diſcourſe of *Elihu* concludes in the next.

Verſ. 24. *Men do therefore fear him: He reſpecteth not any that are wiſe in heart.*

This verſe containeth two things.

Firſt, a practical inference, by way of uſe, from that fourfold doctrine held forth in the former verſe, concerning God. As if *Elihu* had ſaid, *For as much as the Almighty is incomprehenſible, ſo that we cannot find him out; for as much as he is mighty in power, and judgement, and plenty of juſtice, ſo that we can neither avoid him nor delude him, therefore men do fear him.*

Secondly, We have an enforcement of this Inference, by a cogent reaſon, *For he reſpecteth not any that are wiſe in heart.* Who theſe wiſe-hearted ones are, whom God reſpecteth not, will appear in the opening thoſe words,

Men do therefore fear him.

The word rendred *Men*, properly ſignifieth, *weak or feeble men*, as alſo men in affliction, men under the afflicting hand, or rod of God. This ſtrict acception of the word, renders the oppoſition more cleare, ſetting the loweſt of humane frailty, againſt the higheſt divine power. Yet we need not ſtand ſtrictly upon the Grammatical ſignification of the word, but may take men, in all their diviſions and formes; men, be they high or low, afflicted or in proſperity, ought therefore to fear him.

אנשים *Vir miſer & imbecillus.*

Only, it may ſeem moſt ſutable, in way of application, to *Job*, for *Elihu* to uſe this word in that reſtrained ſence; *Afflicted feeble men do fear him*, As if he had ſaid. *O Job, thou art a weak man, a man greatly afflicted, thou haſt been long under the rod and chaſtning hand of God, therefore thou oughteſt to fear him, and not expoſtulate the matter with him, as thou haſt done. Men do*

Therefore fear him.

This illative, *Therefore*, hath reference (as was intimated) to all that was ſaid in the former verſe, yet we may take it ſpecially in theſe

these two particulars. *Therefore men do fear him*; Why?

First, Because he is so great, so immense, so incomprehensible, so powerful, so just, because he hath such plenty of justice, *therefore men do fear him.*

Secondly, *Therefore men do fear him*; Why? Because, though he be cloathed with power, justice and judgement, yet *he will not afflict*, that is, he will not afflict extreamly, in any of those four sences before given; he moderates his power by compassion in his sharpest dispensations towards his people; there is a great mixture of love & mercy with his justice, therefore men do fear him. As if *Elihu* had thus bespoken *Job*; *Others fear God because they experience or find him kind and good to them, even in afflicting; how then cometh it to pass, that thou hast from the beginning carried it, as if God mixt no kindnes nor shewed any tenderness in his afflicting of thee? why is it that thou hast cursed thy day? that thou hast complained that ever thou wast born, that thou hast so often wished for death? Why hast thou said that thou art not only pressed, but even oppressed, that though thy cause be good, yet thou hast born the heaviest loads of evill? Why dost thou strive with him? These are no arguments of thy fear, but of an impatient and fretful spirit, if not of a kind of rage and fury against God himself; These are no proofs that thou doest acknowledge his goodness in afflicting thee, and so fear him, for by these thou dost rather charge and accuse him of harshnesse and severity.*

Now though it may be said (as it hath often in the opening this Book) that *Job* spake such words partly in the heat of his passion, partly through the greatnesse of his pain, partly through the infirmity of his flesh, as also being much moved and provoked by the grievous censures of his friends: yet notwithstanding all this, his words were such as neither could, nor ought to be wholly excused; so that *Elihu* might say, *Men do therefore fear him.* But, *O Job, thou hast carried it, as if thou didst not fear him*, thou hast not behaved thy self like other men, under the same, or alike afflicting hand of God. For though *Job* is to be reckoned among men that feared God, yea, in the highest form of those that feared him, yet he failed much in his affliction, as to the expression of this holy fear.

Thus we have that two-fold reference, in which *Elihu* saith, *Therefore do men fear him.*

First,

First, Because of his great power.

Secondly, Because of that great tenderneſse which he useth in the exercise of his power: Which yet *Job* did scarce acknowledge, as appeared by his complainings and murmurings about the dealings of God.

Men do therefore fear him, so we render, yet 'tis considerable, that the Hebrew runs in the future time, *Men will therefore fear him*, that is, *men should therefore fear him*, or men therefore ought to fear him. Words in the Hebrew of a future signification, bear the importance of a present duty; what good 'tis said men will do, is as if it had been said, they do, or ought to do. And as to the duty here spoken of, *the fear of God*, we may make this conclusion, *All good men do fear God upon these accounts, and all men should, or ought to fear him.* The thing is to be done, whether men do it or no. Where an expresse command is given, every man concerned is bound to obey; and where, or who is the man that is not concern'd in this command, *fear the great and gracious God? Men do therefore*

Ideo timebunt eum homines. Mont.

Verbum futuri temporis solet denotari id quod debet, quod expedit fieri, quare timebunt idem erit, quod timere debent, timere jubentur

Fear him.

What it is to fear God, was shewed largely at the 28th Chapter of this Book and the last Verse, therefore I shall not stay upon it here: Only remember the word signifieth, a gracious, a child-like fear, not a servile slavish fear. There are two words, by which the fear of God is expressed in the Latine tongue, which we may expresse thus, *to fear God*, or, *to be afraid of God.* Good men fear God, but wicked men are afraid of God. Now though the words are often used promiscuously, and to fear, is sometimes taken in the worser, sometimes in the better sence, yet, here we are to take it in the best sence, *Therefore do men fear him*, that is, they ought to stand in awe and not sin against him, they should submit to, not dispute his dealings. The fear of God, in the general notion of it, is nothing else, but Piety and Religion, or the whole worship of God. To say a man is godly or religious, is all one as to say, he is a man fearing God. Now, whereas usually a general rule is urged to lead in a general practise, here a general practise is urged as leading to a general rule. *Men do therefore fear him.*

Deum vereri; Deum timere; Proprie veretur Deum pius, timet superstitiosus. Tamen hanc differentiam interpretes non observant; nam passim timere usurpant pro vereri. Drus.

Whence

Whence we may take this general Obſervation ;

It is the duty of all men, of every man, to fear God.

Men, one or other, ought to have high and honourable thoughts of God, they ought to have holy and reverentiall thoughts of God, they ought to put far away from them all flightneſs, and vanity of ſpirit, when they think or ſpeak of God, they ought to put far from them all boldneſs and preſumption, when they have to do with God. To put away all flight and bold thoughts of God, to take up high and reverential thoughts of God, this, this is to fear God. Yet a little further, and more diſtinctly, I conceive here in this place, to fear God, ſtands in a four-fold oppoſition.

Firſt, Men ſhould fear him, and not murmure at what he doth.

Secondly, They ſhould fear him, and not lightly paſs by what he doth.

Thirdly, They ſhould fear him, and not queſtion him about what he doth.

Fourthly, They ſhould fear him, and not curiouſly ſearch or prie into what he doth.

The Lord having ſuch power to do, ſuch wiſdom in doing, ſuch a mixture of mercy with juſtice in all that he doth, men ſhould only admire and improve his doings, not murmure at, nor lightly paſs by, nor queſtion, nor curiouſly pry into what he doth. Thus to fear God as faithful in all his works, and to fear offending him in any of our own works, is the ſumme of Godlineſs. *Hear the concluſion of all* (ſaith *Solomon* Eccl. 12. 13.) *Fear God, and keep his Commandements: this is the whole of man*, that is (as we tranſlate) the whole duty of man.

Secondly, Taking the word *men* more ſtrictly, as ſignifying, not ſtrong, or mighty men, but weak, afflicted men ;

Note ;

When God is afflicting us, we ought to be much in the fear of God.

What? when the hand of God is upon us, ſhall our hearts be lifted up againſt him? or in our ſelves? what! ſhall not our hearts ſtoop when our backs are burdened with ſorrows, and bowed down

down with a croſs? Not to fear God when we are at furtheſt remove from fear, or trouble in the world, is an argument of a very bad heart; but not to fear him when fear is round about us, or, when himſelf is chaſtening and correcting of us, argueth a much worſe frame of heart. Holy *David* gave this character of his enemies (*Pſal.* 55. 19.) *Becauſe they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.* What ſhall we ſay of them who fear not God though they have many changes? ſuch changes, I mean, as *Job* felt, and cryed out of in the bitterneſs of his ſoul (*Chap.* 10. 17.) *Changes and war are againſt me* : And 'tis conceived, that *Elihu* aimed particularly at *Job* in this paſſage, as if he were the man, who, though under great changes, and in great troubles, yet behaved himſelf unlike thoſe who truly fear the Lord.

Thirdly, Note ;

It is ſo much the duty of man to fear God, that it may well be ſuppoſed of all men, that they fear him.

He can ſcarce be looked upon as a man, who doth not fear God. Doth he know himſelf to be a weak man, who doth not tremble at the remembrance of the Almighty God? Doth he know himſelf to be a ſinful man who doth not tremble at the remembrance of the holy, of the moſt holy God? This duty of fear is due to God upon ſo many accounts (even common accounts) from man, that we may conclude, ſurely, every man feareth God. Shall we not fear him who is incomprehenſibly great in power and in judgment, and in plenty of juſtice? What! not fear him who made us, and preſerveth us, who feeds and cloaths us? What! nor fear him in whoſe hand our breath is, and all our wayes? Theſe, and many more, are common accounts, upon which all men may ſee both reaſon and their own engagement to fear God. So then, as becauſe it is ſo much the duty of a Son to honour his Father, and of a Servant to fear his Maſter, therefore the Scripture ſuppoſeth all Sons and Servants doing it (*Mal.* 1. 6.) *A Son honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Maſter.* He doth not ſay, a Son ought to honour his Father, and a Servant his Maſter, but, *he honoureth, or doth honour.* That perſon deſerveth not the name of a *Son* that doth not honour his Father, nor is he worthy the name of a Servant that doth not honour his Maſter. Now, I ſay, as the Scripture takes it for granted, upon this ground, the naturalneſs

of the duty, that every Son honours his Father, and every Servant his Maſter, ſo it doth, and ſo may we, that every man feareth God. And doubtleſs, if a Son or Servant deſerves not to bear the name of theſe relations, unleſs they honour and fear Father and Maſter, how much leſs do they deſerve to be called Men, who do not fear God, the Almighty God!

Again, from thoſe two particular heads, upon which this fear is grounded: Firſt, *Therefore*, with reſpect to the power and juſtice of God; Secondly, *Therefore*, with reſpect to the mercy and tenderneſs of God,

Note, Firſt;

God is to be feared becauſe he is ſo full of power and juſtice, then eſpecially, when by ſome eminent and ſpecial act of providence, he declares his power, and is doing juſtice.

By how much the more God puts himſelf forth in his power and juſtice, by ſo much the more he is to be feared. 'Tis propheſied (*Rev.* 15. 3.) that when God ſhal ſhew forth his great power, and execute the ſeverity of his juſtice upon Antichriſt, then, *they who ſhall get the victory over the beaſt, and over his image*, &c. *ſhall ſing the Song of Moſes, the ſervant of God, and the ſong of the Lamb, ſaying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, juſt and true are thy wayes thou King of Saints.* What follow eth? *Who ſhall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorifie thy Name?* The vengeance to be poured upon *Babylon* will be ſo great a demonſtration of Gods power and juſtice, that it will give occaſion to all men, the faithful eſpecially, yea, it will call upon them aloud to fear God: *Who ſhall not fear thee?* As if he had ſaid, ſurely there is no man ſo ſtupid, ſo ſtout-hearted, or ſo hard-hearted, but if he ſee God in, or at this work, he will have dreadful apprehenſions of him, and fear before him. Yet this is not ſpoken of ſuch a fear as Chriſt hath fore-told ſhall ſeize upon and poſſeſs the hearts of men before his glorious appearing (*Luke* 21. 25, 26.) *There ſhall be ſignes in the Sun, and in the Moon, and in the Stars, and upon the Earth, diſtreſs of Nations with perplexity, the Sea and the Waters roaring, mens hearts failing them for fear*, &c. It ſhall not be (I ſay) ſuch a fear, a heart-failing, but a heart-enlarging fear; not ſuch a fear as they have, or rather, as hath

hath them, who have their hope only in this life (theſe ſhall fear with an amazing, deſponding, deſpairing fear) but ſuch a fear as they have, who, through grace, have riſen up to *a full aſſurance of hope*, or, *are begotten again unto a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for them.*

The ſecond ground of this fear, is the mercy and goodneſs of God, who though he be thus powerful and juſt, yet he will not afflict, that is, he will not afflict without mercy and tenderneſs to his people.

Hence obſerve;

God is to be feared becauſe he is ſo gracious and full of compaſſion, even while he doth afflict.

There is mercy with God not to afflict, that's ſparing mercy, and therefore he is to be feared; there is mercy alſo with God in moderating our afflictions, that's ſparing mercy too, and *therefore he is to be feared.* The graciouſneſs of God manifeſted ſometimes in ſparing to afflict us, and often in afflicting us ſparingly, ſhould move us to fear him both greatly and alwayes: and if ſparing mercy ſhould move us to fear him, then much more ſhould forgiving and pardoning mercy. When the Lord (*Exod.* 34. 6, 7.) *Paſſed by before Moſes, and proclaimed, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth, keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin*, &c. At this proclamation of grace, *Moſes* (*verſ.* 8.) *made haſte, and bowed his head towards the earth and worſhipped.* How graceleſs then are they, who when they hear that God is gracious, merciful, and abundant in goodneſs, fear him not, but grow wanton and abuſe his kindneſs!

Now they who fear God, upon the due conſideration, either of his power or goodneſs, find their hearts,

Firſt, Much enlarged in the ſervice of God, or in doing the work, and walking in the wayes of God (*Iſa.* 60. 5.)

Secondly, This fear keeps their hearts to a cloſe communion with God (*Jer.* 32. 32.) *I will put my fear in their heart, and they ſhall not depart from me.* We uſually not only depart, but run from thoſe whom we fear; but the true fear of God, Covenant-fear makes us cling about, and keep cloſe to him.

Thirdly, This fear keeps up good thoughts, and high eſtimations of God in the worſt times, or when he is pleaſed to bring the greateſt troubles upon us. An *Iſraelite* indeed, who *feareth the Lord and his goodneſs* (*Hoſ.* 3. 5.) will ſay (let God do what he will with him) *Truly God is good to Iſrael* (*Pſal.* 73. 1.) Let us conſider whether we have theſe effects of a gracious fear working in our hearts upon the remembrance both of the power and mercy of God. *Men do therefore fear him:*

He reſpecteth not any that are wiſe in heart.

Theſe words (as was touched before) preſs the former duty of fearing God, inferred from the greatneſs and excellency of his power, judgment, juſtice, and mercy, yet further upon us. As if he had ſaid, *Men do therefore fear him*; Why? Becauſe, *He reſpecteth not any that are wiſe in heart*, that is, in general, he reſpects none who are ſo wiſe, or wiſe in ſuch a way, as not to fear him upon thoſe fore-mentioned grounds.

He reſpecteth not.

ראה *Videre.* ירא *Timere.*

The word is, *ſeeth not*. There is an elegant paranomiſie in this verſe, the words which ſignifie to *fear* and to *reſpect* or *ſee*, being very near in ſound. God doth not ſee them with reſpect, who do not ſee him with fear: *He ſeeth not any that are wiſe in heart*. It cannot be meant of the ordinary ſight of the eye, that, *he ſeeth not the wiſe in heart*; God ſeeth clearly who they are: Nor can it be meant of the common apprehenſion of the mind, that, *he knoweth not the wiſe in heart*; God underſtands fully what they are; It muſt be meant then of a ſeeing with liking, or ſpecial approbation: God ſeeth not the wiſe in heart ſo, as to like or approve them. Our tranſlation is full and clear to that ſence, *He reſpecteth not, or he regardeth not any that are wiſe in heart*, that is, he takes no notice of them, they are not pleaſing to him. Or thus, *He reſpecteth not any that are wiſe in heart*, that is, as they fear not him, ſo he is not afraid of them. *He reſpecteth not any that are*

Wiſe in heart,

Or, *wiſe of heart*. But ſome may ſay, Doth not God reſpect nor regard, doth not he take notice of thoſe that are wiſe of heart? Whom

Whom then doth he reſpect or regard? of whom will he take notice, if not of the wiſe in heart? Hath the Lord any reſpect for fooles, for ignorant men, for ideots, for ſotts? Surely men that are wiſe in heart, are not only very amiable but honourable in the eyes of God; Why then is it ſaid, *He reſpecteth not any that are wiſe in heart?*

I anſwer, *The wiſe in heart*, are of two ſorts.

Firſt, there are ſome wiſe in heart, who are ſo only in their own opinion, in their own conceits or eyes; they have great thoughts of their own wiſdom, and therefore as they are apt to deſpiſe men, ſo they are far from the fear of God. There is a wiſdom in ſome men oppoſed to the fear of God, whereas true wiſdome in any man is the beginning of that fear, as that fear is called the *beginning of wiſdom* (*Pſal.* 111. 10.) The vulgar Latine varie h the former part of the verſe, yet renders this latter part by way of gloſs, rather than tranſlation, *They that ſeem to themſelves to be wiſe*; and indeed the wiſe in heart, whom God reſpecteth not, are the proudly wiſe, the ſelfiſhly wiſe, ſuch as are wiſe only in themſelves and to themſelves, ſuch as have only that wiſdom which the Apoſtle calleth, *the wiſdom of the fleſh*, or, *the carnal mind* (Rom. 8. 7.) *which is not ſubject to the Law of God, nor indeed* (till mortified) *can be*. He that is carnally wiſe diſputes the commands of God, and takes the boldneſs to cenſure his works; ſuch wiſe men God reſpecteth not, yea, they are under his greateſt diſreſpect.

Qui ſibi videntur eſſe ſapientes. Vulg.

Secondly, Others are truly wiſe, graciouſly wiſe, wiſe for their ſouls, wiſe for heaven, wiſe for happineſs, ſubmitting their wiſdom to the will of God, and doing his will: They that are thus wiſe in heart, the Lord reſpects, and highly reſpects; how can he do otherwiſe? ſeeing this is the character of God himſelf (*Job.* 9. 4.) *He is wiſe in heart, and mighty in ſtrength*. And as God is wiſe in heart, ſo according to their line and meaſure, they that are godly, *are wiſe in heart* too. Therefore taking our tranſlation, the wiſe in heart intended by *Elihu*, muſt needs be thoſe that are only carnally wiſe, politickly wiſe, naturally wiſe, that is, wickedly wiſe, or at beſt vainly, or vain-gloriouſly wiſe.

Further, ſhould we take the *wiſe in heart*, for thoſe that are truly wiſe, graciouſly wiſe, yet it muſt be acknowledged, that even they may ſo miſ-behave themſelves, as to miſs preſent reſpect from God. And

And doubtless, *Elihu* observing that *Job* had spoken somewhat highly of himself, and did not carry it humbly enough under the hand of God (though his spirit was broken and brought down at last) checks him here, by telling him, *God respecteth not any that are wise in heart*, no not him, in that case and frame of spirit, as lifted up in his own wisdom.

Yea, Taking *wise in heart*, in this best sence, for the graciously wise, it is not for their wisdom and holiness that God respecteth or favoureth them. As he will not chastise them without cause, nor correct them but for their good; so when he doth them good or raiseth them up, when he sheweth them any favour, or giveth them any mercy, he doth it not for their wisdom-sake, or holiness-sake, but for his Sons-sake, or for his own Name-sake. *Acts of favour from God, are purely from his free grace*, not from any desert in man; so that every way his mercy is from himself, and undeserved by us. *He respecteth not any that are wise in heart.*

First, As the *wise in heart* stand in opposition to those that fear God, spoken of before, being so stout that they do not humble themselves in his fear,

Note;
True wisdom is always joyned with the fear of God.

Yea, as *Job* concluded (*Chap.* 28. 28.) *The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil* (which none do but they who fear the Lord) *is understanding.*

Secondly, Note;
God regardeth no man for his wisdom, who doth not fear him.

Let men be never so learned and wise, never so prudent and politick, if they have not the true fear of God before their eyes, he values them not, he will not cast an eye of favour upon them, they shall have no countenance with him, no honour from him. The most wise, the only wise God cares not for the wisest of men, who stand so much upon their own understanding, as to stout it out with him. He is not at all moved (unless to displeasure) by their wisdom, who are puffed up with a conceit of their wisdom.

Third-

Thirdly, When 'tis said, *He respecteth not any that are wise in heart*,

Note;
Wisdom, without the fear of God, will do no man good at last, nor can it keep him off from evil.

Let no man think by his wisdom, policy, or subtilty, to keep himself out of the reach of God. If men will not fear and honour him, he knoweth well enough how to deal with them, and to recover his honour upon them.

Note Fourthly;
Let men be as wise and crafty as they will, God is not afraid of them, as if they could do him any hurt, or spoil his designes, as if they could out-wit him, and over-throw his counsels.

Some take upon them, as if they by their wisedom could hinder Gods purposes, and counter-work him, as if they could over-reach or undermine him. We are much afraid of wise men; If such a wise man, if such *a head-piece*, be against us, we think surely he will works us a great deal of mischeife. When *David* found his son *Absalom* rebelling against him, and *Achitophel* joyning with him, he prayed that God would *turn his counsell into foolishness* (2 *Sam.* 15. 31.) *David* feared that *Achitophels* going over to *Absalom*, might have carryed the whole business against him: *But God doth not regard a whole conclave of Achitophels*, he cares not a straw for their plottings and contrivings. The Lord is so far from fearing the counsels of the wise in heart, that he can destroy them by their own wisdome, and not only undoe their counsels, but undoe them by their counsels: The pit which they have digged, they shall fall into it themselves, and be entangled in the lime-twiggs which they have set up for others. All this the holy Prophet intended when he said of God (*Isa.* 44. 25.) *He frustrateth the tokens of the lyers, and maketh the diviners mad: He turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish.* Diviners grow mad when they see things issuing quite contrary to their predictions and expectations. He that can destroy the wise with their own wisdom, needs not fear the wisdom of the wisest. 'Tis the noblest way of vanquishing an enemy, when we wound him with his own weapons, and turn his own Artillery upon him.

Thus

Thus God dealeth with the wiſe in heart; they are nothing in his hands, they cannot put the leaſt ſtop to what he hath a purpoſe to do; but he can put a ſtop to all their purpoſes. *The fooliſhneſs of God* (ſaith the Apoſtle, *1 Cor.* 1. 25.) *is wiſer than men.* He ſaith alſo in the third Chapter of the ſame Epiſtle (*verſ* 19.) *The wiſdome of this world is fooliſhneſs with God*; for it is written (and that writing is taken out of this Book of *Job*, Chap: 5. 13.) *He taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs.* And again, *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wiſe, that they are vaine*; and vain he knoweth them to be in a twofold reſpect: Firſt, becauſe ſinfull or evill in themſelves; Secondly, becauſe he knows how to make them barren or abortive, ſucceſsleſs and ineffectual unto the wiſe: So that they all become like moſt Adventurers at a Lottery, *going out with their hearts full of hopes, but returning with their hands full of blanks*, Diſappoyntment, Diſappoyntment, being written upon all their counſels and undertakings.

Again, Taking *the wiſe in heart* for thoſe who are truly wiſe, godly wiſe,

Learn, Fifthly;

God will not forbear, when he ſeeth cauſe to afflict thoſe who are indeed the wiſeſt and holieſt of men.

Let no man think, that becauſe he is wiſe or holy, he muſt not therefore be touched or medled with. Some conceive the chief deſign of writing this Book, was to let us ſee this truth, That let men be never ſo holy, never ſo upright, or godly, yet they muſt not claime priviledge from the croſs, nor complain when they are under it, that God deals not well with them. In this *Job* over-acted, ſuppoſing there was no cauſe why ſuch a man as he, ſhould have ſuch ſevere chaſtenings and rebukes; but let men be never ſo wiſe, never ſo good, God may ſee cauſe to lay his chaſtening rods upon them; and had the Lord nothing elſe to ſay for it, his ſoveraignty will bear him out in it againſt the beſt of men. The clay muſt neither ſay to the Potter, why haſt thou made me ſo? nor why haſt thou marr'd me ſo? *Be ſilent O all fleſh* (good as well as bad) *before the Lord.*

Laſtly,

Laſtly, Obſerve;

What-ever favour, what-ever mercy God beſtoweth upon the holieſt and wiſeſt of men, he doth it not with reſpect to any wiſdome, holineſs, or goodneſs in them, but for his own Name ſake, or becauſe he will.

He reſpecteth not the wiſe in heart. No man can merit the leaſt favour from God; his is free grace. All good cometh to us through the Son of his love, and it was meerly of his love, that ever his Son came to us and dyed for us. Therefore let us not ſay, ſuch a one was a good man, ſuch a one was an holy man, therefore it was ſo and ſo with him. As what we are or can do cannot oblige him (when he ſees cauſe) from giving us correction, ſo he is un-obliged as to what we are or can do, in giving us ſalvation, whether temporal or eternal. *He reſpecteth not the wiſe in heart.*

There are yet two other readings of the words, which I ſhall ſet before the Reader, and then conclude all.

The word which we tranſlate *reſpecteth*, ſignifying properly *to ſee*, ſome keep to that propriety of it, and render the text thus; *He ſeeth not all wiſe in heart*; that is, when the Lord looketh among the children of men, he doth not find many, yea ſcarce any of them wiſe. Thus the ſenſe runs in connection with the former part of the verſe, *Men ſhould be ſo wiſe as to feare God, and not diſpute any of his proceedings*; But he ſeeth or knoweth that all are not ſo; yea he findeth that a great many, even the moſt of men by much are very fools. The truth is, all men naturally are no better (*Pſal.* 14. 2.) *The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to ſee if there were any that did underſtand and ſeek God*; but he did not find one wiſe in heart among all the children of men, as Deſcendants from the firſt *Adam*. And when he cometh among the beſt of men, men of a ſecond birth, the ſeed and deſcendants of the ſecond *Adam*, he doth not ſee them ſo wiſe as to give him glory in every condition, nor under every diſpenſation, yea, he finds a great deal of folly in their hearts. Taking this ſenſe of the words, *Elihu* ſeems here again to give *Job* a cloſe rebuke, as not having behaved himſelf ſo wiſely under his ſufferings, as became a man profeſſing the feare of God. 'Tis rare to find a man wiſe throughout, a man having true wiſdome of

Is certe non invenit ſapientes, quoſcunq; intuetur. Bez.

heart, and ordering himſelf according to the rules of that wiſdome, in all the turnes and changes of his life.

Non videbit eum omnis ſapiens corde, vel non videbunt eum (ſc. deum) omnes ſapientes corde. q.d. nullus eorum ipſum videbit. Drus.

Secondly, The latter part of the verſe is tranſlated thus; *Men, though never ſo wiſe in heart, cannot ſee him.* This reading runs the conſtruction of the words quite another way: The former ſaid, *He ſeeth not all wiſe in heart*; this ſaith, *Men wiſe in heart cannot ſee him.* The ſence of which reading may be thus conceived; The wiſeſt men cannot ſee God, he is both inviſible and incomprehenſible. As men cannot ſee him at all by ſence, ſo neither can they comprehend him by reaſon; As the eye cannot take him in who is inviſible, ſo neither can a finite underſtanding take him in, who is infinite in underſtanding. We have a ſight of God through faith in this life: Thus *Moſes ſaw him who is inviſible* (*Heb.* 11. 27.) We *ſee him here darkly, through a glaſs*, the glaſs of his word and works, of his ordinances and providences (1 *Cor.* 13. 12.) But the clear ſight of him *face to face*, the ſight of him *as he is*, is reſerved to hereafter (1 *Cor.* 13. 12. 1 *John* 3. 2.) Theſe two latter readings of this latter part of the verſe, hold out uſefull truths for further meditation; but I adhere to our own as more clear in the originall, as alſo more ſutable to the ſcope and intendment of the foregoing diſcourſe.

Elihu having ſaid this, ſits down and is ſilent, leaving *Job* to meditate upon and conſider what he had ſaid.

And now, no ſooner had *Elihu* wound up his bottome, and made an end, but behold, God began and took *Job* in hand; he ſpake to him out of the whirlwind, at the beginning of the next Chapter, and brought him upon his knees before he had done with him, as will appeare further, if the patience of God give time and opportunity to go ſo far. To him be all the praiſe and glory, who hath helped thus far. *Amen.*

A TABLE

A TABLE

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A

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